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BRAVE THE NEW ADVENTURE PATH
THE SAVAGE TIDE RISES

DUNGEON®

ISSUE 140 · NOVEMBER 2006

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SAVAGE TIDE
INVASION OF THE FROG-MEN

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CANNIBAL PIRATES › BULLYWUGS › A NASTY PIT FIEND
MONTE COOK'S DUNGEONCRAFT › DOWNER › MT. ZOGON

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ISSUE #140 NOVEMBER 2006 VOLUME 20, NO 11

DUNGEON

paizo.com/dungeon

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Dungeon November 2006, Volume 20, Number 11 (ISSN# 0890-7102/USPS 0002-005) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200, United States of America. Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA 98009-9998 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Dungeon, Paizo Publishing LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200.

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POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO
Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200.

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BACK ISSUES: **paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060.

SUBSCRIPTIONS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Contact Paizo Publishing at **subscriptions@paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060.

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DISTRIBUTION: National and international distribution is provided by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: (201) 634-7400. Fax: (201) 634-7499.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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"Within the bowels of these elements,
Where we are tortur'd and remain for ever:
Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
In one self-place; but where we are is hell,
And where hell is, there must we ever be:
And, to be short, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that are not heaven."

Christopher Marlowe
"The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus"

DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 12/31/06.

RPGA NETWORK

Drop by rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:
The Bullywug Gambit (140BG1DN)
The Fall of Graymalkin Academy (140FG1DN)
Heart of Hellfire Mountain (140HM1DN)

WRITING CAMPAIGNS

"Why have elves, halflings, and humans been mysteriously disappearing and what are the strange creatures that have been raiding the peaceful kingdom of Eltrun? Rortet, the king of the city of Eltrun, and all of his royal subjects have changed into beasts! It is up to your party to lift the Curse of Sekamina Cave!"

So reads the cover blurb to *The Curse of Sekamina Cave*. This actually wasn't the first D&D adventure I wrote (that honor goes to the long-lost *Jungles of Tiboquoboc*), but it was my first real attempt to ape the look of TSR's modules of the era, complete with some pretty horrific cover art drawn by yours truly. If "Tiboquoboc" was a rip-off of *Isle of Dread*, then "Sekamina" was a rip-off of *The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*.

As I neared the end of "Sekamina," it became clear that there was more to be told about the sinister machinations of the demon lord Yamasoth, so I expanded the adventure into a second module. And then a third. And a fourth. By the end, it had transformed into an epic seven-part campaign revolving around that ever-popular plotline: What if a demon lord (in this case, Obox-ob) figured out how to unite the demons of the Abyss and waged a war on the multiverse?

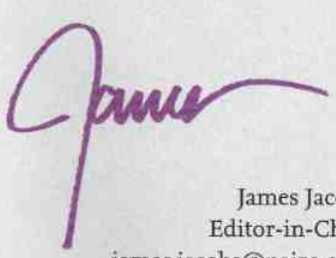
Now, I'll be the first to admit that the plot for this campaign was a bit cliché, but it served its purpose well enough for me back in junior high. And now and then, there's even a name (like Shadowsea) or a monster (like the ulgurstasta or Obox-ob) or even a map (the map of the *Blue Nixie* from "There Is No Honor" was first drawn about two decades ago) that I can "borrow" from myself when I've got writer's block. And it was certainly great practice for developing a 12-part epic like Shackled City, Age of Worms, or Savage Tide.

Developing an entire campaign designed to take a party of characters from 1st to 20th level is a daunting task. It's also exciting, fun, and rewarding—helping with the direction and content of DUNGEON's Adventure Paths is without a doubt one of the highlights of my career.

Shackled City was very much the child of former Editor-in-Chief Chris Thomasson. At the time, it was a pretty outlandish idea; nothing on this scale had ever been attempted in the magazine, and if it turned out to be a failure, DUNGEON magazine would have been saddled with having a third (or more) of its pages dominated by something no one had any interest in reading or playing. Fortunately, Chris has a pretty good head on his shoulders and his little idea ended up being the most popular thing that DUNGEON's ever done.

A lot goes into the creation of a DUNGEON magazine Adventure Path. The first step seems to happen at Gen Con, when a couple of magazine editors, punchy from a busy day of seminars, booth duty, and meetings, sit down to a late dinner and realize, "Woah... we've got to figure out what our next Adventure Path is gonna be about!" A few weeks after that initial brainstorm session, we have a series of meetings involving the editorial and art staff of both magazines where we toss out ideas, adventure plots, bad guys, and themes for each of the campaign's 12 parts. Someone then gets to collect all these ideas into an outline, massaging it into a logically flowing storyline while at the same time keeping it simple enough that it leaves plenty of room for each adventure's author to personalize it. The outline goes through several rounds of revision, is sent to Wizards of the Coast for approval, and then we start contacting authors and artists, at which point the actual work can finally begin. By the time the first issue comes out, we at DUNGEON have generally been living and breathing Adventure Path for half a year already, so everyone's more or less a basket case with worry about how it'll be received. Will we have a hit on our hands? Or have we consigned a third of the magazine to shameful exile for a year?

At the very least, Savage Tide will have better art than Sekamina Cave did!



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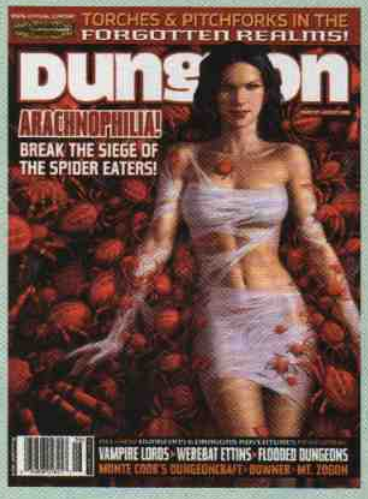
DUNGEON #136


TORCHES & PITCHFORKS IN THE FORGOTTEN REALMS!
ARACHNOPHILIA!
BREAK THE SIEGE OF THE SPIDER EATERS!
VAMPIRE LORDS · WEREBAT ETTINS · FLOODED DUNGEONS
MONTE COOK'S DUNGEONCRAFT · DOWNER · MT. ZOGON

Every once in a while, we run covers that get everyone all worked up. As soon as James Ryman's hauntingly beautiful depiction of Arianne from this issue's "Siege of the Spider Eaters" showed up, I knew we'd be getting some posts on our messageboards. After all, spiders do disturb a lot of people, but sometimes you need to show a lot of spiders to catch people's attention. The adventure itself is one of those that spent an unusual amount of time in limbo between being accepted and being published, so it's particularly satisfying to see Tim and Eileen Connors' first adventure finally see the light of day.

Also featured in this issue was Peter Vinogradov's "Tealpeck's Flood," another adventure that languished for months (years?) in the oubliette here at Paizo. A flooded dungeon infested with piranhas, this adventure is sure to reward PCs who spent skill points on Profession (sailor).

The last adventure, Jason Nelson-Brown's "Man Forever," showed us just how complicated politics can get in the Forgotten Realms when cultists of Shar get involved.

Back issues of *Dungeon* #137 are available at paizo.com.

Prison Mail

Flying Shark = Awesome

Recently my family held a reunion in North Carolina, and on a whim I decided to bring along some of my D&D supplies. As fate would have it, they turned my vacation into one of the most memorable gaming experiences I've ever taken part in. My cousins rolled up characters and we ran through Michael Kortes' "Home Under the Range" (issue #134).

Congrats on a fantastic adventure! One player described the duel with The Rider as one of most enjoyable he had ever fought. And a flying shark? Come on, that's just AWESOME! The epic battle was a nice conclusion—I had a ball playing Shugo Jai, even when he died to a well-timed critical hit (as all great villains must). However, Sosias takes the cake—a talking rope as the main antagonist is probably the most innovative idea I've seen in quite some time. Sure, the players laughed... until the Concentration checks started.

In fact, the adventure was a bit too much of a hit. My cousins were begging for more, and I hadn't brought any 4th-level material. Luckily, the Map of Mystery sparked an idea for a Lovecraftian Far Realms adventure that I quickly put together. I cannot emphasize enough how helpful those maps are, both as the basis for a quick instant adventure or as the inspiration for a more well-planned game. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words—which is roughly how many words you can fit on one *Dungeon* page, so I guess you're breaking even? At any rate, keep 'em coming, especially more linked maps like you had between issues #136 and #137.

Timm Woods
Via Email

Good to hear the flying shark and the rest of "Home Under the Range" was such a big hit, Timm! Truth be told, the flying shark (also known as a "terlen") is one of the more popular monsters to joke about here at Paizo, so when we saw there was one in this proposal, we knew we had to print it. It didn't hurt that the rest of the adventure was so wonderfully imaginative and fun, of course!

It's also good to hear that the Map of Mystery did its job; you're absolutely right that we generally fit about 1,000 words on a page (actually, it's more like 850 to 900). We almost had to cut the Map of Mystery from this issue, but fortunately we were able to juggle some ads and finesse some words so we could bring you Chris West's latest creation.—James Jacobs

Cruel DM Alert

My best wishes to Erik Mona as he moves up the corporate tree at Paizo. I have read many of Mr. Mona's previous works and have enjoyed reading *Dungeon* while he was at the helm. I thought that his farewell letter was poignant, but flawed in one part. In the

NEXT MONTH IN DUNGEON

THE SEA WYVERN'S WAKE

by Richard Pett

It's time to bid farewell to the city of Sasserine as the PCs board the *Sea Wyvern* for a 3,000 mile voyage south into the uncharted waters of the Vohoun Ocean. Their destination: the Isle of Dread. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 5th-level characters.

SWORDS OF DRAGONSLAKE

by Nicolas Logue

Scandal has struck the theater circuit of the city of Talantier! Ancient betrayal, murderous plots, and a plethora of suspects plague the PCs as they race to unravel the mystery before its bloody conclusion plays out on the stage. A D&D adventure for 12th-level characters.

VLINDARIAN'S VAULT

by Johnathan M. Richards

A missing dragon and a stolen artifact lead the PCs to a treasure vault hidden deep in the Elemental Plane of Fire—a vault operated by an insane beholder serviced by a cult of fanatics. A D&D adventure for 18th-level characters.

issue #137 editorial, Mr. Mona asks in the third column the following:

"...and if you are running the Age Of Worms, do me a favor and take out a few PCs with the nasty stuff we designed for you. Do it for old times sake."

I do not know if this is meant to be tongue in cheek or not, which is the weakness of the written word. That being, that you cannot tell what is actually meant at times because all you have to go by is what you see on the page. You cannot see a facial expression, hear intonation, and so on. However, I think that this was done in bad taste for the following reasons.

1) The DM becomes an adversary, not an adjudicator: Is it really fair to ask the DM to start offing PCs when it is the DM that holds the power? Think of it; you are setting up the DM to purposely kill PC's. It's no longer a game, but a match of wits where the one that has the final say so pulls the strings. How can players compete with the DM when the DM has the power to change DC numbers, sets the threshold for failure for saving throws, and so on? I have had one or two DM's like that and it is a game killer. The current DM that I have played under for the last fourteen years is not like that and I say, "Thank you," Larry.

2) It's a matter of trust: When I as a DM run a game/campaign, the players are trusting me with their hard work. They spend the time putting the nuts and bolts together about this character. They believe that they have a chance to go out and change the fantasy world that they live in and make a difference. The players believe that the DM is going to be fair. Yes, it is just a game, but most players I know take character death hard. Yes, the editorial that Mr. Mona wrote about the characters walking through the swamp and suddenly being eaten by a giant crocodile was hilarious. It was hilarious, because the players thought that it was hilarious and the artist in the group made it funny when he drew the hands and feet of the swallowed halfling sticking out of the croc's mouth. However, most players would be a tad sad, and some downright upset when that happens to them.

3) Lastly, it's about being entertained: Most of us "civilians" who game do not have the luxury of gaming often or being surrounded by a gaming atmosphere. I am not saying that Paizo employees play all day. I'm sure that they work hard. There is, however, a certain jaded attitude that being exposed to gaming all day in one form or another brings to one's outlook. Most of us play once a month, or once a week, if we are lucky. D&D has always been about the story to me. It is an adventure story written collectively by the DM and the players. A special story that only a few are privileged to ever read. To change that from a cooperative effort to a competing effort just seems wrong to me.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and best wishes to Mr. Mona in your future endeavors at Paizo!

James C Alpeter
Via Email

Erik responds: Thanks for the kind words, Jim! In the interest of fairness, I should point out that while several characters in my weekly Age of Worms campaign found their way into the snouts of giant crocodiles, none of them managed to die in the process, which no doubt increased the fun for all involved. I have managed to off five characters so far, thanks to an acid beetle swarm, some failed ninjarobics, an army of lizardfolk, a dominated animal companion, and a hungry otyugh. In my defense, the latter death was just mopping up by killing off a character DUNGEON *author Nick Logue created for a single sit-in, but it felt pretty good to have the trash monster chew up his bones, munch munch.*

I don't want to give the wrong impression, or to suggest that I love killing off characters or anything. But there's got to be an element of danger involved, and I would be pleased to know that when a few Age of Worms player characters get inadvertently mulched, the DM is thinking of old Erik Mona and what he brought to DUNGEON *magazine. Brings a tear to my eye, it does.*—Erik Mona

Actually, if you're looking for a killer DM at Paizo, you can't go wrong with Jason Bulmahn and the special d20 made out of meteorite iron he uses to confirm critical hits. I'm on my fourth character in his EBERRON *campaign already!*—James Jacobs

Savage Tide

The Bullywug Gambit

When an attempt to arrange an early inheritance backfires, a man of lesser ambition than Vanthus Vanderboren would no doubt withdraw into his sister's manse to hide under her skirts and pray that the truth of his patricide remains hidden. Fortunately for Vanthus, lack of ambition has never been a problem. Now the Vanderborens' prodigal son slinks east along the coast to Blood Bay, lured by rumors of an incredible prize kept in a smuggler's hideout called Kraken's Cove. Yet what he is destined to find there is far more than a lucrative bit of banditry. What awaits him is the savage tide.

"The Bullywug Gambit" is the second chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #349 of *Dragon* magazine looks into the region surrounding Sasserine, and provides useful information if your PCs wish to explore this area more thoroughly than they do in the course of this adventure.

BY NICOLAS LOGUE
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | LOW LEVEL (1ST–5TH) | URBAN AND DUNGEON CRAWL

Switching Sides

It's possible that the PCs agreed to Rowyn's offer to join the Lotus Dragons at the end of "There Is No Honor." In this case, their reasons for traveling to Kraken's Cove change—Rowyn is concerned that Vanthus might not intend to return to Sasserine with her share of the haul, and hires the PCs to trail him in secret to Kraken's Cove and observe him—if he seems to be preparing treachery, the PCs are to intercede, capture him, and return him and his loot to the Lotus Dragons for punishment.

When she learns that Vanthus has apparently fled the region, Rowyn is momentarily distraught but recovers quickly. She asks the PCs to take advantage of the bullywug attack on Vanderboren Manor to sneak into the estate and learn what they can about where Vanthus may have fled to. While they're there, if they can steal some more of Lavinia's wealth for the Lotus Dragons... all the better.

Adventure Background

Brissa Santos was a vivacious woman, in youth a notorious pickpocket who, after several brushes with the law, turned her attention to art. Her paintings still grace many of the inns and taverns in Sasserine's Azure and Merchant Districts, yet the sedentary life of an artist left the woman wanting more. When she met Vanthus Vanderboren several months ago, she felt she'd found a man who could provide her just that. As a couple, they encouraged each other's self-destructive habits, and finally Brissa revealed to her lover her family's ties to the Crimson Fleet, an infamous consortium of pirates and smugglers. In an attempt to win Vanthus' favor, Brissa told him of nearby Kraken's Cove, and of how the Fleet used it as a staging area for smuggling operations. Even more enticing—scuttlebutt held that the latest cargo bound for this secret cove included an enormous black pearl destined for an undisclosed noble's collection in the city of Sasserine. Vanthus and Brissa planned their raid on Kraken's Cove to the finest detail, going so far as to hire a small army of desperate mercenaries from a local guild of scoundrels called the Black Shield Company to provide support for the assault.

Yet Brissa's love for her dark suitor had blinded her. To Vanthus, she was nothing more than another conquest he could use to get what he needs—she wasn't even his only lover. Vanthus was a member of the Lotus Dragons, a guild of thieves poised to seize control of Sasserine's underworld. By using Brissa and her contacts with the Crimson Fleet, Vanthus hoped to rob Kraken's Cove blind, present the loot to his lover Rowyn (the guildmistress of the Lotus Dragons), and pin the blame for the theft on Brissa, leaving her and her family to suffer the brunt of any retaliation from the pirates.

Yet what neither Brissa nor Vanthus realized was that the immense black pearl they sought to steal was something far more than a fantastic treasure—it was the first in a wave of sinister artifacts from the Abyss itself: a *shadow pearl*. When the robbery turned sour, the *shadow pearl* activated, releasing a devastating savage tide that transformed nearly everything it touched into ravenous monsters. By some mockery of fate, Vanthus resisted the effects of the savage tide and fled on a stolen ship, leaving Brissa to a horrid fate of insatiable fiendish hunger.

Adventure Synopsis

Still seeking Vanthus for their employer, Lavinia Vanderboren, and spurred on by discoveries made in the Lotus Dragon guildhall, the PCs seek out Kraken's Cove, nestled within the scarlet reaches of Blood Bay. Expecting to find a secret pirate hideout, the PCs instead discover the place in the grips of utter bedlam. Arriving shortly after Vanthus releases the savage tide, the PCs must contend with savage flesh-eating pirates. To make matters worse, this particular crew was transporting dangerous and exotic creatures in the holds of their ships, and now their deadly cargo, infected by the Abyssal energies of the tide, has escaped. Man and beast haunt the cove's twisting passageways, and the PCs must navigate the caverns of Kraken's Cove while enduring an onslaught from savage enemies.

Eventually they encounter Captain Harliss Javell, one of the few pirates to survive the savage tide intact. From her, the PCs learn that she sent her first mate and a band of froglike bullywug conscripts into Sasserine to extract revenge from Vanthus and his home, erroneously assuming the cowardly man fled there from Kraken's Cove. The party must race back to Vanderboren manor before their patron suffers at the slimy hands of bullywug mercenaries.

Yet in order to reach the manor, the PCs must first navigate a city in the throes of a wild celebration in honor of Kyuss' defeat one year past. Parades and revelry reign in the streets, and the PCs must wind their way through the wild throng to Lavinia's manor. In transit, they are targeted by a band of assassins hired by Kellani family coin to pay the party back for their transgressions against Rowyn and the Lotus Dragons in the previous adventure. After contending with stilt-walking monks, the PCs reach Vanderboren manor with little time to lose.

Inside, Drevoraz Kabran, Captain Javell's first mate, has captured Lavinia and her household. The PCs must stop the bullywug gambit, battling the frogmen to free their lovely patron before she pays for her brother's crimes with blood.

Adventure Hooks

If you are not playing this adventure as part of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, then there are several ways to motivate the PCs to get in on the action. Even if you are using "The Bullywug Gambit" as part of the path, you may want to consider the options below to further involve the PCs in this adventure.

Abducted by Pirates: A PC's friend or relation has been pressed into service with the Crimson Fleet. Research reveals that the press gang has relocated to Kraken's Cove. Whether they have succumbed to the savage tide is left to you.

Courting Lavinia: If a PC is noble born, or simply ambitious, he may be courting Lavinia's hand in marriage for any number of reasons (love, money, or an increase in social status). Upon hearing that her brother has gotten mixed up with the wrong crowd, the party could head to Kraken's Cove to sort him out and bring him back to Lavinia in an effort to earn her favor.

PART ONE: TO KRAKEN'S COVE

After recovering the money stolen from the Vanderboren Vault and defeating the Lotus Dragon thieves, the PCs still haven't succeeded in the primary mission assigned them by their patron, Lavinia Vanderboren. Her brother Vanthus is still at large, but with the discovery of the true extent of Vanthus's involvement in the death of her parents, Lavinia no longer hopes to find and redeem him. Instead, she wants him returned to Sasserine so he can answer for his crimes. According to documents discovered in the Lotus Dragon guildhall, Vanthus and a woman named Brissa recently left the city to travel to a location known as Kraken's Cove to mount a robbery of several pirate ships supposedly moored nearby.

Determining the approximate location of Kraken's Cove on the eastern shore of Blood Bay is possible with a DC 20 Gather Information check, a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check, or a 50 gp visit to Highwall House in Sasserine's Noble District to speak to Sloren Highwall, the expert on local geography.

The Journey To Blood Bay

Although Vanthus has already left for Kraken's Cove, the actual point at which the pirates arrive and Vanthus, Brissa, and their hired mercenaries make their move is scheduled to occur a few hours before the PCs reach the area, no matter how long they take getting there. The PCs should have time to recover from their previous adventure, liquidate loot and shop for gear, and perhaps even go on one or two minor side quests before they set out for Kraken's Cove.

The cove itself lies on the eastern shore of Blood Bay, about 60 miles along a marshy coastline (or a mere 40 miles as the gull flies). The brisk salt-breeze of the ocean would make for a pleasant journey, if it weren't for the oppressive proximity of the trackless marshlands and the looming Amedio jungle beyond.

The safest and fastest method of reaching Kraken's Cove is by boat. If one of the PCs has ranks in Profession (sailor), a rowboat that seats four can be purchased in Sasserine for a mere 50 gp. For parties who lack this skill, the best option is to hire a fishing boat or similar vessel. Blood Bay is a notorious region, and most sailors or fisherfolk balk at visiting this location. With a DC 25 Diplomacy check, round-trip passage to Kraken's Cove from Sasserine can be had for 8 gp per passenger—otherwise, the best the PCs can hope for is 20 gp per passenger. If the PCs wish their transport to wait for them while they take care of business in Kraken's Cove, there's a further 10 gp/day charge. By rowboat, the journey takes 40 hours. If the PCs stop to rest, rowing for 8-hour stretches each day, it takes five days to reach Kraken's Cove. If they row non-stop in shifts, they can reach the cove in just under two days. By pinnace, cog, or fishing boat, the trip takes only 16 hours (non-stop—if the PCs leave on Day 1 at 6:00 in the morning, they can expect to reach Kraken's Cove at 10:00 in the evening).

If the PCs wish to travel to Kraken's Cove by land, they face a long, grueling journey through a trackless, monster- and bullywug-infested swamp. Hugging the coast is no solution; beaches are rare, and more often the transition from swamp to sea consists of miles of briny saltmarshes with little solid ground. A maze of hummocks and marsh provides a maddeningly slow method of travel on foot—assuming the PCs travel for only 8 hours a day at a speed of 30 feet, it'll take them five days to traverse the 60-mile journey to Kraken's Cove.

Feel free to liven up the journey with random encounters as you see fit. "Savage Tidings" in issue #349 of *Dragon* magazine provides some sample random encounters for the region, or you could build encounters with bullywugs, sharks, and other local terrors to menace the PCs.

PART TWO: KRAKEN'S COVE

Kraken's Cove serves smugglers well, for the entrance to this secluded rift in the coastal cliffs that line the eastern shore of Blood Bay is riddled with dangerous reefs and submerged threats. As a result, only sailors who know the region or possess charts of the waters dare approach the cliffs here—none of the ships the PCs have access to have either. If they're making their own way to Kraken's Cove, they'll need to make a series of a dozen DC 30 Profession (sailor) checks to wind their way through the maze of reefs to approach by sea.

Without charts, the safest option is to put aground a few miles north of Kraken's Cove at a secluded beach. From there, it's a fairly short hike up to the cliff tops and then south along a narrow path that eventually reaches the cove itself.

When the PCs arrive, things are not well in Kraken's Cove. A few short hours before they get there, Vanthus and his agents struck, setting fire to several of the pirate ships moored in the harbor and releasing many cages of exotic (and

Wormfall Festival

As the PCs prepare for their journey to Kraken's Cove, make sure to mention how the city of Sasserine is gearing up for a major festival. The one-year anniversary of the defeat of Kyuss draws near. Although the final events of the Age of Worms played out thousands of miles to the north, repercussions were felt in this region as the Worm-god nearly brought about the dawn of a new age. In the nearby Spire of Long Shadows, a small army of his undead minions erupted from the ruins there, along with several dangerous outsiders known as broodfiends. Three of these broodfiends made their way to Sasserine, but were destroyed by high-level heroes from the city of Cauldron before they could do much damage.

The event has since become yet another reason for Sasserine's Dawn Council to celebrate, the production of festivals being an excellent way to build up the city's morale and wealth as they continue to recover from 100 years of servitude to a foreign power. Criers loudly announce the coming festival on the city streets and canals, posters go up on tavern walls, and everywhere the citizens are abuzz with excitement. The Wormfall Festival is in full swing by the time the PCs return to the city in Part Three, but if you plant its seeds before they leave, the festival won't be a surprise to them.

dangerous) animals the pirates were in the process of transferring from ship holds to holding pens on land. During the chaos, Vanthus attempted to steal the *shadow pearl* from the hold of the *Slippery Eel*, but was caught by the ship's captain, Harliss Javell. No match for her, Vanthus tried to escape, and in so doing accidentally triggered the *shadow pearl*, unleashing its savage tide upon the Cove. The resulting wash of Abyssal energies transformed most of the pirates, thugs, and smuggled creatures into savage monsters. Only a few avoided this terrible fate, among them Vanthus (who quickly made good his escape aboard one of the two pirate ships to survive the fire), Captain Javell, and her first mate, a half-orc named Drevoraz Kabran. Furious at the permanent damage Vanthus had inflicted on her operation, Captain Javell commanded Drevoraz to make his way through the swamps to Sasserine, picking up a tribe of allied bullywugs who served the Crimson Fleet as caretakers of the region surrounding Kraken's Cove along the way. His mission: infiltrate Sasserine, make his way to Vanderboren manor where Captain Javell (erroneously) believes Vanthus fled, and raze the estate to the ground after murdering Vanthus and his family.

Captain Javell hoped to have dealt with the transformed monsters that were once her crew and cargo by the time Drevoraz returns, but these savage monsters quickly proved to be too much for her to handle on her own. By the time the PCs arrive, she's retreated to area **K14** of the caves, abandoning the cove itself to savagery.

Mad Monkeys (EL 3)

Even before the PCs reach Kraken's Cove, they'll realize something has gone horribly wrong. Plumes of smoke rise into the sky above the cove, visible from a mile away. Worse, as the PCs approach, swaths of dead wildlife, from parrot to gull to monkey to snake, lie dead on the ground, their bodies horribly distorted and deformed. What few wild animals remain alive are similarly deformed, and shockingly aggressive. The PCs should witness animals tearing each other apart numerous times on their approach, and at some point before they reach the cove, a clutch of four savage monkeys attacks them as well.

Creatures: The four savage monkeys flop and writhe down from the trees or across the ground with shocking speed. Their jaws are filled with tiny fangs, and their bodies are covered with open sores from which hooked bonespurs protrude. The savage monkeys fight to the death.

Savage Monkeys (4) **CR 1**
CE Tiny animal (chaotic)
Monster Manual 276, Appendix 2
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 6 (1 HD), ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1
Weakness afflicted

Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.
Melee bite +4 (1d4–2 plus disease [DC 12])
Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +0; **Grp** –10

Abilities Str 7, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 5

SQ death throes

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +10, Climb +10, Hide +10, Listen +3, Spot +3

Into the Inferno

Once the PCs reach the cliffs overlooking Kraken's Cove, they are greeted with a tragic and horrific sight.

In the sheltered cove below, an inferno rages atop the water. Several ships, including a two-masted caravel, a sizeable frigate, a long barge, and what might have once been a schooner are all ablaze. Further out, a three-masted caravel seems to have escaped the fire—for now. A shiny slick on the surface of the water itself burns as well, creating a wall of wood and flame. The heat rises in searing sheets, and the roar of the flaming maelstrom mixed with the crashing surf masks any other sounds that might be issuing up from below. Through periodic gaps in the smoke, however, movement on the beach is visible—something still lives in the inferno below.

When Vanthus needed a distraction to sneak on board the *Slippery Eel* to steal the black pearl, he emptied several barrels of whale oil from one of the ships' cargoes into the harbor. The thick substance floated atop the water, and Vanthus lit it afire. The oil slick will continue to burn for an hour, after which only the ship moored furthest out survives—a caravel called the *Sea Wyvern*.

Descent to the beach below can be accomplished a number of ways. The cliffs that surround the cove are sheer but feature numerous handholds. They're forty feet high, and can be scaled with a DC 15 Climb check.

A more tempting route is via a rickety wooden walkway that descends from the eastern cliff down to the beach below. The slippery, narrow surface can be navigated with a DC 10 Balance check. Remember that a balancing character moves at half speed unless he takes a –5 penalty on his check. Although the fire has not yet reached it, the rickety wooden walkway has not been used by the pirates in some time and has rotted in the salt air. The walkway can support up to two creatures at a time. If a third creature boards it, the entire walkway creaks and moans ominously. If it still supports three creatures one round later, it collapses into the sea. The walkway collapses immediately if a fourth creature boards it. If the walkway collapses, all creatures on it must make a DC 13 Reflex save. Success indicates the creature clings to the cliff wall or a jutting piece of wood, and may attempt to clamber down the cliff. Failure indicates a fall into the water below, which isn't quite deep enough to cushion the landing. The base damage inflicted by the fall depends on how high up the character was when the walkway collapsed (no more than 40 feet, in any event) plus an additional 1d6 points of damage from the collapsing structure itself.

To make matters worse, while the PCs navigate the walkway, the heavy ropes mooring the burning *Slippery Eel* finally burn through and snap audibly. The *Eel* wrenches free and the tide carries it careening into the west wall of the cove, where it destroys the central 50 feet of walkway in a terrific crash. A DC 15 Spot or Listen check is enough to note the vessel's sudden motion, granting two rounds of action before it strikes. All PCs on the walkway when the Eel strikes it must make DC 15 Balance checks to avoid being knocked off; those in the middle section that is destroyed fall as described above (with a DC 13 Reflex save allowing them to grab a protrusion). Increase falling damage in this case by 1d6 fire as the PC crashes into the burning wreck below.

The water in the eastern section of the cove is 20 feet deep—deep enough that a person can dive into the water from the cliffs forty feet above, taking no damage if they make a DC 15 Swim or Tumble check. Failure indicates 2d3 points of nonlethal damage.

Kraken's Cove Cave Features

The smuggler's caves in Kraken's Cove are the brainchild of a retired pirate named Kigante Valeros. Kigante discovered the caves two decades ago and realized

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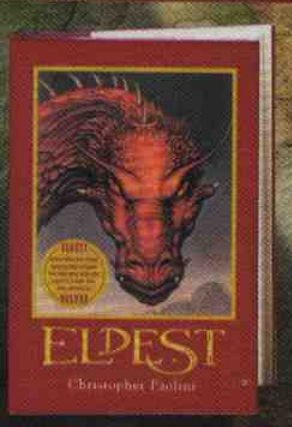

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The Sea Wyvern

The one surviving ship in the harbor is destined to play an important role in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. This is the *Sea Wyvern*. This three-masted caravel served as a pirate ship for the last twenty years. The *Sea Wyvern* is a fearsome vessel. Her sails are decorated with stylized figures of a wyvern; its tail raised over its back as though ready to strike its enemies. Even its figurehead carries the motif; a powerful wyvern, its wings unfurled, crouches at the prow. This ship has seen plenty of action; her hull is scarred in many places by scratches and dents, and a single huge claw mark rakes across the starboard, deliberately left as a scar of battle. The ship's wheel is designed to represent a dozen-headed wyvern.

The *Sea Wyvern* becomes central to the Savage Tide Adventure Path starting in the next adventure, "The *Sea Wyvern's* Wake." The PCs first glimpse of the ship is an important moment of this adventure—be sure to give them a powerful description of the ship. The ship itself can be crewed by a group as small as 7 individuals as long as one of them has ranks in Profession (sailor), but even if the PCs leave the shp in Kraken's Cove for the remainder of the adventure, it's securely moored. They'll be able to head back to collect it when they need it at the start of the next adventure.

then that they'd make a great place for the Crimson Fleet to stage smuggling operations, transfer cargo and consolidate booty, or simply rest this far north of the fleet's home port of Scuttlecove. He and a small group of smugglers and guards were the keepers of the Kraken's Cove caves. They provided aid to visiting pirates and safeguarded the hideout when no one else was about. When Vanthus triggered the savage tide, many of Kigante's men succumbed to the madness. Although Kigante himself retained his humanity, he did not live for long after, and was murdered and eaten by his own men.

The cave walls are of smooth, wet stone and stalactites hang from the ceiling in places. Passageways average ten feet in height, and caverns are about twenty feet high. The pirates have long since removed the stalagmites that once clustered in many of the caves, and have spread sand through the entire area to even the floor and make movement through the caves less treacherous. The caves are lit by cheap hooded lanterns that hang from hooks in the walls every 30 feet; these lanterns have only a few hours of fuel left before they start burning out.

Remember that the PCs first arrive in this area only a short time after the savage tide wreaks this terrible toll. The freshly transformed savage pirates tore apart those unfortunate enough to resist the tide's magic, leaving body parts, swaths of blood stained sand, deep scratches in the walls, and other macabre hints of mayhem throughout the caves. Further, exploration of the caves is accompanied by a symphony of howls, shrieks, maniacal laughter, clanging of metal on metal, and other discordant sounds one might expect from a madhouse whose locks have failed. Much of this cacophony comes from area **K7**, as the savage slaves therein howl and shake the bars of their cages in an attempt to escape. As a result, Listen checks in the caves suffer a –4 penalty. At some point when the PCs have defeated enough of the savage creatures dwelling in the Cove (determined by you), this penalty goes away.

K1. Beach of Ruin (EL 4)

A fifty-foot-wide beach separates the burning waters of Kraken's Cove from the cliffs to the north. A ten-foot-wide cave opens at the base of the cliff to the northwest, while to the northeast several planks provide a crude bridge across a tide pool to a second, smaller cave entrance. The swaths of blood and ragged body parts strewn across the beach testify to a terrible and recent battle upon the sands here. Broken crates and bamboo cages litter the area, blood and bits of bone sprayed across bolts of silk and cracked barrels of ambergris seeping into the coarse, rocky sand. A number of mangled corpses, each stripped nearly clean of flesh and bones cracked open, lie strewn about the beach. The casualties are staggering, with a quick count putting the dead at nearly twenty.

This beachhead was a mooring ground for the Crimson Fleet, a place where the pirates could dock their ships between raids and store contraband, much of it living creatures. When Vanthus released the savage tide, the majority of the pirates both on the ships and here on the beach became ravening cannibals in a matter of seconds, falling upon those who resisted the tide in a frenzy. When the battle ended, some of the surviving savage pirates boarded the ships and locked themselves below decks, only to be consumed in the inferno. Others fled deeper into the caves, pursued by savage monsters liberated from their cages. Two remain here, lurking hungrily among the rubble.

Examination of the bodies in this area shows them to be devoured with a ferocity that belies reason—bones gnashed in a single crushing bite, entire lengths of flesh and muscle ripped free. It is also obvious that the battle broke out suddenly between friends and allies. Crossbow bolts riddle the few savage pirates slain, and the mingling of deformed corpses and those nearly completely devoured is demonstrative of the infighting that took place. Near area **K2**, two sea cats lie dead on the rocks, still chained fast to a heavy iron stake embedded in the ground.

Creatures: Two savage pirates hide in the ruined wreckage along the shore, waiting for untainted flesh to draw them out. If they note any PCs approaching the cave entrances, the gibbering menaces leap from hiding and charge.

Savage Pirates (2): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2.

Treasure: A DC 20 Search of the rubble (taking ten minutes per check, or three hours, 20 minutes on a take 20 check) uncovers three surviving items of value—a leather sack of stolen saffron worth 600 gp, a crate of fine dishware worth 200 gp, and a case of *potions of cure moderate wounds* stolen from a naval frigate (of which only three survive intact).

A character that explores the harbor underwater notes a section of seabed about forty feet from shore that appears strangely barren of life—the rocks and sand gleam, with not a trace of seaweed to be found. With a DC 20 Search check

of this region, a PC discovers what looks like a fist-sized black pearl that has shattered into five jagged chunks. This was the *shadow pearl* that triggered the savage tide. Now nonmagical, the shattered remains are still worth 250 gp.

K2. Tide Pool

A deep pool of rushing water separates a cave entrance from the beachhead. Two wide wooden planks serve as a crude bridge to cross the surging waters of the pool

The water is 20 feet deep below the boards. Crossing the slippery planks requires a DC 10 Balance check.

Anyone making a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check realizes that, given the way in which the water in the tide pool ebbs and flows, an underwater passageway likely exists somewhere below. Anyone in the water locates the entrance with a DC 15 Search check. Navigating the seaway to area **K11** is possible with a DC 15 Swim check.

K3. Mess Hall (EL 5)

This cavern must have served as a mess hall, yet now the large tables lie in ruins. To the north, dozens of barrels that once contained fresh water and food stores have been smashed to splinters. Bodies lie throughout the cave in various stages of dismemberment and consumption—it's hard to count the total dead due to the state of the corpses, but at least six people recently met a gory end in this cave.

This large cavern is the serving area where the Crimson Fleet pirates took their meals. The hall was the stomping ground of Kadmos Grimly, a fierce cook who spiced his food to match his temper—hot. Cooking for a band of cutthroat pirates is a dangerous job, and most of Grimly's predecessors were run through on account of their lack of culinary skill. Grimly's food was no better than that of those who came before him, but few wished to chance his ire or his deft mastery of the cleaver, which claimed more than a few fingers of dissatisfied feasters foolish enough to voice their opinions on the cuisine.

Creatures: Kadmos still reigns supreme in the mess hall, having succumbed to the fell power of the savage tide. He's spent the last hour in a gruesome repast of his friends—a former bosun lies strewn on the table. Grimly is in the kitchen area in the southwest corner of the room, hacking away with relish at a dead crewman with his cleaver, while two of his fellow cannibals wait impatiently at a table. As soon as they detect the PCs, they attack and fight to the death.

Savage Pirates (3): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2.

K4. Wyvernsting's Corridor (EL 4)

Creature: This long, high-ceilinged passageway has been chosen by a strange creature as an ambush point. This creature is Navesh Wyvernsting, a phanaton slave born into captivity on a pirate ship many years ago. The phanatons are a race of small arboreal creatures with large eyes and prehensile tails that resemble a cross between a monkey and a raccoon. Between their arms and legs are thin membranes the creatures use to glide through the air. Navesh's ancestors come from a tribe on the Isle of Dread, yet he has never known the companionship of others of his kind. Captain Harliss Javell purchased him from a Scarlet Brotherhood slaver and quickly realized the monkey-like creature would prove a capable crewman. In return for limited freedom, she released him from slavery and hired him as a bosun.

Once lauded for his cool head under fire, his quirky sense of humor, and his unquestioning loyalty to Javell, the savage tide has transformed Navesh into a long-limbed, deformed creature with writhing, boneless fingers. The savage phanaton lurks in this hallway, waiting for something exciting to happen in area **K3** before scurrying forth to join the fight. He's rather afraid of Ripclaw (the denizen of area **K5**), and won't join any fights that occur there, although he might come to investigate a few rounds after a fight in the cave ends.

Navesh's once-fine gray-brown fur is matted with blood and bits of gory tissue. Sizzling drool dribbles from his fanged, misshapen mouth. He slavers as

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he grunts and hoots before finally managing to snarl out in Common, "Come to me, meatbags. Just give me a mouthful of your tasty pink flesh!"

NAVESH WYVERNSTING **CR 4**

Male savage phanaton rogue 3
CE Small humanoid (chaotic)
DRAGON 339 62, Appendix 2
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +13, Spot +13
Languages Common, Elven, Goblin

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 22 (3 HD), ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2
Weakness afflicted

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; gliding
Melee mwk kukri +5 (1d3+1/18–20) and bite –1 (1d6 plus disease [DC12])
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –1
Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance, oil of keen edge*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 8
SQ forest awareness
Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (kukri)
Skills Balance +11, Climb +9, Diplomacy –5, Disguise –5, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information –5, Hide +13, Intimidate +3, Jump +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +13 (+17 in forests), Spot +13, Swim +7, Tumble +11
Possessions combat gear, masterwork kukri, *slippers of spider climbing*, gold nose ring and silver chain linked to silver hoop earring (whole set worth 100 gp), ruby ring worth 120 gp

Forest Awareness (Ex) Navesh gains a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws in forest locations.

Gliding (Ex) Navesh's rudimentary wings allow him to negate damage from a fall of any height and allow 20 feet of forward travel for every 5 feet of descent, effectively giving him a fly speed of 20 feet while falling (average maneuverability). He cannot hover, even if his maneuverability rating increases. He can't glide while carrying a medium or heavy load, nor can he glide while unconscious or helpless.

Tactics: If Navesh hears the sounds of battle in area **K3**, he still possesses the sense of mind to down his potion and apply his *oil of keen edge* to his masterwork kukri. Of all the savage pirates, Navesh retains the most intelligence, and he knows that any group capable of slaying Kadmos is not to be trifled with lightly. He climbs up into the dark recesses of the ceiling and glides down to ambush the PCs when they arrive. Navesh fights until slain.

K5. Hall of Hanging Silks (EL 4)

Dozens of bolts of once-fine brocaded silk hang from lines of rope stretched lengthwise across the ceiling of this chamber, making it difficult to accurately judge the size of the sandy-floored cavern.

This large cavern is where the pirates store waterlogged booty from ships damaged and taking on water before being boarded. The silks hanging from the lines were damaged by a leak, and were hung up to dry only a few hours

Kraken's Cove
K1
K2
K3
K4
K5
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K7
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K10
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One square = 10 feet

before the savage tide tore through the region.

Creature: One of the *Slippery Eel's* most dangerous recent acquisitions from the Isle of Dread was a deinonychus. The dinosaur had been painstakingly transported here for sale, but escaped its cage after being transformed by the savage tide. The dinosaur was not-so-affectionately nicknamed Ripclaw after it disemboweled a careless pirate who got too close to the creature's cage. Ripclaw's back writhes with wriggling tentacles, several of which weep pus and leave a disgusting trail of yellowish smears on nearby silk sheets.

RIPCLAW **CR 4**
Savage deinonychus
CE Medium animal (chaotic)
Monster Manual 60, Appendix 2
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +13, Spot +13

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17
hp 42 (4 HD); ferocity ; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2
Weakness afflicted

Spd 70 ft.
Melee talons +9 (1d8+6) and 2 foreclaws +7 (1d3+3) and bite +7 (2d4+3 plus disease [DC 18])
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +9
Atk Options pounce

Abilities Str 23, Dex 15, Con 23, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ death throes
Feats Improved Initiative, Multiattack
Skills Escape Artist +6, Hide +10, Jump +31, Listen +13, Spot +13, Survival +9

Tactics: The hanging silks provide cover for any creature standing behind them, as they serve to obscure vision and cast long shadows on the walls. As soon as Ripclaw detects the PCs, it begins stalking them, slipping quietly through the hanging sheets of silk until it picks out a single target with its scent. The dinosaur then pounces on that target, fighting to the death.

Treasure: The hanging silks are badly damaged; if they're harvested, 1d8 of them are salvageable and worth 50 gp each. A low table in the northeast corner of the room also holds a number of rare books laid out to dry on it. Though water damaged, this collection of tomes on topics ranging from lizardfolk cuisine to naturalist studies of the Amedio are worth 200 gp as a lot.

K6. Laboratory (EL 3)

A barricade of shelves and tables blocks entrance to this cavern. The barricade has hardness 5 and 30 hit points, and can be pushed aside with a DC 18 Strength check.

A fairly even layer of sand covers the floor of this musty-smelling cavern. Large pottery urns line the walls of the cave, and within each grows a riot of strange mushrooms, fluted toadstools, phosphorescent molds, greasy-looking fronds of pale lichens, and all matter of strange fungi. Several large glass terrariums, their walls beaded with condensation, stand along the west wall. One of these is shattered, the loamy soil within spilling out onto the sandy floor near a long but low table heaped with flasks, jars, bottles, and tools. Protruding from under the table are a pair of small boots, perhaps those of a gnome.

Coursing the seas of the world, exploring far-off frontiers, and pillaging their communities offered Leemo Varand the perfect opportunity to study a wide range of environments. A naturalist and scholar with a curiously overdeveloped interest in fungus, Leemo enlisted with the Crimson Fleet as a poisoner with the stipulation that he be allowed to gather all manner of bizarre samples from the farthest reaches of the world. Leemo ended up on the *Slippery Eel*, and Kigante Valeros set this cave aside for the awkward gnome to store a collection of plants and fungi odd, rare, and lethal.

Creatures: Ironically, Leemo met his fate at the frond of one his own dangerous samples. When the savage tide struck, the little gnome barricaded himself in this room. In so doing, he accidentally shattered a terrarium containing a violet fungus, which immediately lashed out at Leemo and quickly killed him. The violet fungus then retreated into the swath of fungi along the northwest wall. Anyone who investigates the table (or Leemo's boots) comes in reach of the fungi's tentacles, in which case it immediately attacks.

Violet Fungus: hp 15; *Monster Manual* 112.

Treasure: A strange creature that resembles a two-foot-long tadpole with a mass of four facial tentacles and a lamprey-like mouth is laid out on a wax dissection pad on the table. This hideous creature is a malformed and preserved larval mind flayer that Leemo recently acquired; some scholars might pay as much as 1,000 gp for such a find, although most merchants would pass on the foul-smelling monster.

A length of countertop on the northern wall of the room contains two small jars of maylss root paste, a vial of sassone leaf residue, a dose of id moss, and a striped toadstool (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 297 for details on these poisons). Leemo's body is rotted beyond recognition, but a search of his corpse ironically reveals the two *potions of lesser restoration* he always kept on hand in case of an accident.

K7. Slave Pens (EL 2 to 9)

As the PCs approach this chamber, the sound of shouts, wet cries of anguish, and the clang of metal on metal grows louder.

Dozens of five-foot-wide iron cages are built into the walls of this large cavern. Some are empty, while others contain the partially eaten remains of dead men and women. Yet most horrible are those cages that contain thrashing, wailing figures. Each of these seems more deformed than the last, twisting legs, writhing arms, vestigial heads, and jaws agape with too many teeth are all on display as the mad prisoners howl and slobber and throw themselves against the walls of their cages in a cacophonous attempt to break free.

Creatures: The Crimson Fleet pirates used these cages to house prisoners, sorting them into groups before shipping them off to Scarlet Brotherhood ports for sale as slaves. When the savage tide washed over the caves, those prisoners who didn't succumb to the tide were quickly murdered and eaten by those who did.

There are now 11 savage slaves locked in these cages. They thrash and writhe, but for all their noise they aren't quite strong enough to break free from their cages. Anyone who comes within five feet of a cage is in reach, though, and the savage occupant may be able to make a bite attack against such foes. Although each of these slaves are different humanoid races and classes, you can simply use the savage pirate statblock as necessary should any of these deformed souls become important in combat.

Savage Prisoners (11): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2 (use savage pirate).

K8. Trophy Cave

This sandy-floored cavern seems to be some sort of trophy hall. The centerpiece of the displays is an enormous reptilian skull, nearly six feet in length, mounted on a wooden display. Other trophies line the walls—nameplates from ships, battered sea chests, mounted heads of sea monsters, and weathered figureheads, each doubtless carrying a sordid history of theft and betrayal.

Kigante Valeros' interest in oddities was not limited to creatures. The retired captain kept a collection of other odd and obscure nautical treasures on display in this cave. Most of these trophies are relatively valueless, but there are a few exceptions.

The enormous skull is from a tyrannosaurus; other monstrous trophies include several shark jaws, a sahuagin's head, jars containing enormous fragments of tentacles, and a set of dragon turtle teeth. Among the nameplates of ships (all stolen or scavenged from other ships, pirate and merchant vessel alike) are names like *St. Asmod's Hope* or *Wavereaper*. One recent addition to this collection is a barnacle-encrusted mast of wood with letters badly eroded by a great deal of time spent below the waves. The only legible letters read "T...M...AUT." Nearby hangs a heavily rusted ship's bell bearing the name *Sea Ghost*.

Treasure: The only trophy of any real value is a leather-bound collection of nautical charts well over three hundred years old. These charts are remarkably accurate, even more so than most modern ones, and grant a +4 circumstance bonus on Profession (sailor) checks made to plot a course on the ocean.

Three locked sea chests (Open Lock DC 30) in the corner of the room contain a total of 120 gp, 448 sp, 683 cp, three garnets worth 20 gp each, an emerald brooch worth 50 gp, and 5 pearls worth 100 gp apiece.

K9. Kennel (EL 4)

The bodies of three strange creatures lie in a mangled heap in the center of this cave, their bodies torn apart and gnawed down to the bone. It's difficult to tell what manner of wolflike or hyenalike creatures they once were. Spiked collars lie empty beside the decapitated bodies, chains running from each to iron hooks in the walls.

Creatures: Kigante often kept exotic animals as guardians, picking and choosing new creatures from the exotic animals smuggled through the region. His most recent guardians were a pack of five krenshars, creatures he'd taken to calling "skull dogs." When the savage tide struck, three of the krenshars managed to resist the tide, and were quickly torn apart by the two that did not. The remaining savage krenshars wait here still. They wear spiked collars attached to long chains that allow them full reach of anywhere in this cave, but prohibit them from pursuing foes beyond the cavern. The savage krenshars have larger jaws than their untainted kin, and large patches of their mangy fur have fallen away to reveal leprous skin covered with writhing tendrils.

Savage Krenshars (2) **CR 2**
CE Medium magical beast (chaotic)
Monster Manual 163, Appendix 2
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +5
AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 15 (2 HD); ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1
Weakness afflicted
Spd 50 ft.
Melee bite +4 (1d8+2 plus disease [DC 13]) and 2 claws +2 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Special Actions scare
Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 13
SQ death throes
Feats Multiattack, Track
Skills Escape Artist +6, Hide +4, Jump +15, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Spot +5

K10. Storage

This small area is filled with piles of blankets, clothing, cases of crossbow bolts, and a collection of swords, pole arms, axes, and other weaponry.

These weapons could serve to replenish characters who have lost weapons or other pieces of equipment. There are 120 crossbow bolts, 3 short swords, 5 rapiers, 2 long swords, 2 scimitars, a glaive, 2 guisarmes, a halberd, 2 light crossbows, a heavy crossbow, 2 battle axes, 9 throwing axes, and a greataxe to be had here.

K11. Tributary Chamber (EL 4)

The sound of sloshing water fills this damp cavern. The eastern half of the cave consists of a large, frothy tide pool, its depths thick with seaweed and its surface roiling with the surge of the sea. Several narrow fissures in the ceiling seem to lead up and out through the cliff face to the south, allowing a brisk breeze to whip through the chamber.

The narrow fissures are impassable to creatures of larger than Tiny size, and even Tiny creatures must make a DC 30 Escape Artist check to navigate them. The tide pool itself is connected via submerged tunnels to the pools in area **K2** and **K14**.

Creature: Although Vanthus withstood the rapture of the savage tide, his accomplice Brissa was not so lucky. The tide transformed the once-beautiful young woman into a malformed monster, a slavering madwoman with a twisted jaw of shark's teeth, a hunched back, and wide splayed hands writhing with additional hook-tipped fingers. Vanthus escaped her

hunger by pushing her overboard before she recovered from the pain of her transformation, then fled the cove entirely. Brissa swam through the seaway and eventually ended up in this room, wracked with unholy hunger and twisted memories of love.

Brissa waits near the southern edge of the pool, hunkered over a large pile of raw fish and sea anemones she has nearly finished devouring. If she notices intruders in this cave, she leaps to her feet, shrieking out in a hoarse voice, "Where are you, my love? Is that you? I knew you wouldn't leave me! Sooooo hungry... please... feed me..."

Brissa Santos **CR 4**
Female savage human rogue 2/fighter 1
CE Medium humanoid (chaotic)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Dodge
hp 27 (3 HD); ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; evasion
Weakness afflicted

Spd 40 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6+1/18–20) and bite –1 (1d8 plus disease [DC 14])
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13
SQ death throes, trapfinding
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +6, Climb +6, Craft (painting) +2, Diplomacy +2, Disguise –3, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information –3, Hide +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Spot +10, Swim +4
Possessions +1 *studded leather*, masterwork rapier, purple silk cloak with emerald clasp worth 20 gp, silver locket containing a tiny portrait of Vanthus (worth 10 gp)

K12. Savage Maze (EL 5)

This small labyrinth of tunnels leads to Kigante's personal chambers. The retired pirate chose the caverns beyond as his lair precisely because of this—the warren of tunnels would have made an excellent defense against enemies who were unfamiliar with their layout. Unfortunately, the enemies that finally got to Kigante did not have this disadvantage.

Creatures: Three of the savage pirates that killed and consumed Kigante still lurk in these caves. Although their knowledge of the maze's layout could have given them a significant tactical advantage, their madness prevents such coordinated assaults. Once one of them notices the PCs in the area, it shrieks and howls in delight as it shambles forth to attack. Its two mates arrive soon thereafter to join the battle.

Savage Pirates (3): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2.

K13. Kigante's Chamber

This cavern has been outfitted with the finest in stolen furniture. Thick rugs cover the floor, and fine silk tapestries and masterful seascape paintings hang from the walls, giving the place an almost regal feel. A four-poster bed takes up much of a large nook to the south, and nearby stands an oak desk with a matching armoire. Alas, much of this furniture is ruined, spattered and stained with gore and deeply scarred by swordplay. A skeletal body dressed in the ruins of a once-fine suit of studded leather lies in a red heap at the foot of the bed. Five more bodies lie about the room, horribly deformed men and women who seem to have perished on a rapier's point.

Kigante Valeros, an old salty dog of a half-elf and a Crimson Fleet veteran, called this dry warm patch of cave home. The cavern walls are lined with extraordinary paintings (more than a few of which were gifts from Brissa).

Kigante himself lies against the foot of his bed, his corpse half-devoured by savage pirates. Kigante did not die without a fight, as the bodies of five savage pirates in the room testify.

Treasure: Kigante's weapon of choice, a +1 *rapier* with a bronze hilt in the shape of a griffon, lies under his bed where it was kicked by a savage pirate eager to get to the dying man's flesh. A DC 15 Search check is enough to find the magic weapon (its discovery is automatic if a player specifically states he's checking under the bed).

A closer examination of Kigante reveals a bit more treasure—a *ring of swimming* (a gold band set with several aquamarine gemstones) still sits snug on a bony finger, and his darkwood buckler remains strapped to an arm. A DC 15 Search of his desk uncovers three silver bars worth 30 gp each in a lower drawer. A vial of vermillion ink worth 40 gp sits on top of the desk, one of the few objects in the room to escape damage during the battle that ended Kigante's life.

K14. Javell's Standoff (EL 4 or 13)

As the PCs approach this cavern, the sound of combat, the unmistakable slobbering cries of rage and hunger from several savage pirates, and a woman's voice shouting profane threats and curses become audible.

The floor of this cavern slopes downward to the southeast, finally ending in a large tide pool. The waters seem to be surging from a submerged passageway leading to the southwest. A hammock strung between two stalagmites sways gently to the south, next to an overturned table and a broken chair.

This chamber was used by Kigante as an escape route via the seaway, and as a quiet place to withdraw from the revels of piracy and contemplate life and his place in the great wheel of the world. Now, this tranquil getaway is the site of a heated battle between Harliss Javell and a horde of savage pirates.

Creatures: Harliss Javell has been backed into the southern corner of the cave, where she uses the overturned table as cover to fend off a half-dozen savage pirates. Over a dozen more lay dead on the ground, yet for all her skills in swordplay, Harliss is growing weary. She's been bitten several times by the savage pirates, and is suffering from savage fever already. When she spies the PCs, she cries out, "Oi! Get in the fight or stay outta me way, buckos. These things are lookin' to die, and I plan on obliging."

Harliss is a bold beauty with raven-black hair that flows like the deepest shade of midnight against her deeply tanned skin. She wears tight leather armor studded with fire opals and pearls and wields a curved rapier and dagger in a blinding display of swordplay. As she fights, she taunts her foes with phrases like "Ye picked the wrong lass to make a meal of today," or "Hungry? Have a taste o'me cold steel, ya stinking carcass!". As she recognizes one of the savage pirates, she might even say something like "Jebidiah? Is that you lad? You've looked better boy. Here, let me send you on your way." The savage pirates themselves don't notice the PCs until they are attacked, at which point three of them break off the fight against Harliss to attack them.

Captain Harliss Javell **CR 13**

Female human swashbuckler 3/rogue 3/scarlet corsair 7
CN Medium humanoid
Stormwrack 65
Init +4; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Aquan, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18
hp 76 (currently 51, 13 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +16, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 40 ft.
Melee +2 *rapier* +18/+13/+8 (1d6+2/18–20) or +2 *rapier* +16/+11/+6 (1d6+2/18–20) and mwk dagger +15 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +17 (1d4/19–20)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Flick of the Wrist, Improved Feint, corsair's feint, sneak attack +4d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14 (currently 8), Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ sailor's step, trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Expertise, Flick of the Wrist, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +17, Bluff +14, Climb +6, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +19, Jump +17, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (sailor) +13, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +12, Swim +14, Tumble +15, Use Rope +13

Possessions +3 *leather armor*, +2 *rapier*, 4 masterwork daggers, *ring of protection +2*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *rope of climbing*, *boots of striding and springing*, a pair of marilith-shaped earrings with each limb composed of a different precious metal worth 1,200 gp for the pair, a jade necklace with a shark's tooth at its center worth 600 gp

Corsair's Feint (Ex) Harliss may make a feint as a free action once every 1d4 rounds.
Flick of the Wrist (Ex) If Harliss draws a light weapon and makes a melee attack with it in the same round, she catches her opponent flat-footed (for the purpose of this attack only). She may use this feat only once per round and once per opponent during any single combat encounter. This feat is from *Complete Warrior*.
Grace (Ex) Harliss gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex saves as long as she does not wear medium or heavy armor and is not carrying a medium or heavy load.
Insightful Strike (Ex) Harliss applies her Intelligence bonus to damage rolls with any light weapon, as well as any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse. Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to this additional damage. Harliss loses this ability if she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.
Sailor's Step (Ex) When aboard a ship and wearing nothing more than light armor, Harliss gains a +2 dodge bonus to her Armor Class.
Scourge of the Seas (Ex) When Harliss uses Intimidate to demoralize foes, the attempt affects all enemies within 30 feet who can see and hear her, and the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to her Charisma modifier. This is a mind-affecting ability, and multiple uses of the ability don't stack.

Savage Pirates (8): hp 10 each; see Appendix 2.

Tactics: Although wounded and sick, Harliss Javell should have no problem dealing with the remaining savage pirates. Nonetheless, she fights using Combat Expertise to increase her Armor Class. Be sure to play up Javell's imposing presence and puissance at swordplay in this encounter and feel free to have her bail out a PC about to meet death at any moment with a hurled dagger. Javell is poetry in motion as she avoids the maws of the cannibals, dancing among them, her blades flashing impossibly fast. When the last cannibal pirate falls, Javell sheaths her blades and regards the PCs with a cold, appraising eye as she catches her breath

Harliss Javell

and tries to determine who they are and what they're about. If the PCs attempt to fight her, they most likely find themselves dead before they know what happened, so it is best to describe her battle with the savage pirates in a manner that makes the PCs think twice about crossing steel with her. If they insist on fighting, Javell fights with Combat Reflexes and uses Tumble to avoid being surrounded. She won't stop to finish off anyone she drops, and as soon as she realizes the way is clear, she may just abandon the PCs and attempt to escape on foot.

Speaking With Captain Javell

After the battle, Harliss calls out to the PCs. "What manner of driftwood do we have here? Speak up! Your names, lubbers! If only so's I can cut 'em inta' yer chests and save the undertaker some asking 'round."

Harliss appreciates characters who stand up to her gruff attitude with threats of their own, but in truth she is grateful to see non-deformed faces and hopes they may have some insight into what happened to her crew. Harliss turns her hard gaze on the PCs and demands to know their business in this "little piece o' hell." Take some time to roleplay this scene, and establish her character well, as Harliss is destined to make further appearances in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. In fact, the PCs' interactions with her here may greatly affect their later dealings with the Crimson Fleet.

Harliss grows frustrated when she realizes that the PCs know less about what happened at Kraken's Cove than she. This, combined with her clouded mind from the savage fever she's contracted, makes her a bit more talkative about Crimson Fleet matters than she probably should be. As soon as she hears Vanthus Vanderboren's name, she flies into a poetic litany of profanity that lasts several seconds and is as magnificent as it is scandalous to hear. When she recovers herself, she explains as she rights the toppled table and sits down upon it to rest. Feel free to break up the following soliloquy as you wish, allowing the PCs to interject questions here and there.

"All this ye see here," the flamboyant woman says as she waves her hand at the slaughtered deformities, "and what nightmares ye must have fought through t'get t'me; t'was all Vanthus Vanderboren's doing! That vomitous pig came t'me with his hussy 'n asked t'see our wares; made like he were a black marketeer lookin' fer some fur or scale t'move. Told him we had a ship coming in today what were full of exotica for him ta' shop, so he stayed on a few nights. Seemed a fine enough chap, but then not an hour ago, he dumped a hold full of whale oil into the cove and lit it up. I was on th'*Slippery Eel* at the time, and that's when I caught the two fo them on board, fixin t'rob me! Can ye imagine that? A pair of base curs tryin' t'rob Captain Harliss Javell? Anyway, I stuck the fool in the arm with me blade, he yelped, and then as he ducked aside he dropped what he were tryin' t'rob. Were a black pearl. One th'size o'a man's fist, mind you! Was going to make some fair coin off that bauble, but as it fell, the thing cracked like an egg. Some o'Vanthus's blood from my blade spattered the pearl, and it boiled and flashed with light. This foul, choking green gas started spewin' from it, burning through the wood like it were acid. I grabbed th'thing, ran up topside, then threw it inta' the water, but as it struck, the thing exploded!

"After that... things got a bit weird, mind ye. A green mist filled my vision, and I felt strange. Like someone else were in my head. Someone... someone hungry! And the rage! Rage like I never felt 'afore! And then, just like that, it were gone. Vanthus were on deck too by then, but he and I were the only humans left. That pearl, it did something to me crew. Ta' Vanthus' little girly too! Turned them bad, like something ye might find in a net and throw back on account the sun got no purpose lookin' upon it. These things!" She kicks one of the deformed pirates in distaste. "Whatever were in that damnable pearl turned over three score men into... into man-eating freaks!"

"Vanthus, he seen what his friend and the rest turned into. He dove into th'water t'get away. I did the same, only I swam for shore. Found me first mate Drevoraz there. He'd resisted the change too, as had some others here and there, yet they were nothin' but the banquet for those things. We fought our way into th'caves and managed to hole up here with Captain Kigante, the man who keeps these caves for us. Only, Kigante's freak food now; he got jumped by a mob of them not twenty minutes ago. Tore him apart like they was sharks!

"And one more thing. I think they got the sick in their maws. The places they done bit me still burn, and it's hard to think straight... But hey! You fought yer way in here! That means there ain't much left of them out there, yeah?"

If asked about the pearl, Captain Javell has little more to say. She admits she knew the pearl was magic, but that she'd been asked by her superiors to transport it to Kraken's Cove and wait there for someone to arrive to pick it up. She refuses to reveal much more about the identity of her superiors or who was supposed to collect the pearl, but a DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that she seems rather afraid of both mysterious individuals.

If the PCs ask her about Vanthus (or if they start pressing her too forcefully for more details about the pearl or her allies), she curses and flies into a tirade.

"I'll learn that cur what it is t'foul my business! I know who he is! Th'Vanderboren name's no secret to me. I know he's got family'n holdings in Sasserine! I sent me right hand Drevoraz t'deal with yer friend, I did. Drevoraz is on his merry way to Sasserine as we speak. He'll do for Vanthus' sister, his mum and pop, and any other family or friends the bastard has in that dunghill city. Cross the Crimson Fleet and we take everything in your life from ye. Best not forget that, boyo."

Harliss does not reveal the involvement of a tribe of allied bullywugs in this strike on Vanderboren Manor. If asked why she didn't go instead, she explains how she wasn't about to abandon Kigante to these men turned monsters and fought her way into the cove in hopes of helping him escape (only partially true—in fact, she was more interested in making sure certain papers on his desk did not fall into the wrong hands).

At this point, ask the PC with the highest Diplomacy bonus to make a Diplomacy

check; all other PCs can attempt to aid another by making DC 10 Diplomacy checks of their own, with each success granting a +2 bonus on the primary roller's check. If the PCs have healed Harliss' wounds or used *lesser restoration* to cure some or all of her Intelligence damage, the primary roller also gains a +8 bonus on his Diplomacy check. Make a note of Harliss' final attitude, as this determines how she interacts with the party later in the Savage Tide Adventure Path when their paths cross again.

DC 4 or less (Hostile): Harliss smiles, thanks the PCs for hearing out her rant, and then apologizes to them for what must be done; they are, after all, friends of Vanthus, and now it's time for them to pay for his sins against the Crimson Fleet. She attacks the PCs at once, intending to kill them all.

DC 5 (Unfriendly): Harliss eyes the PCs suspiciously, but decides that it's probable that they're after Vanthus as much as she. She bids the PCs to be on their way, warning them to stay away from Vanderboren Manor for a few days if they don't want to get hurt. If the PCs don't leave, she turns hostile and attacks.

DC 15 (Indifferent): Harliss remains indifferent to the PCs. She encourages them to leave Kraken's Cove, inferring that they'd best not be around when reinforcements arrive. This is a bluff; Harliss has decided to cut her losses, and not long after the PCs leave, she flees the region on foot to the east. She eventually reaches a Scarlet Brotherhood fort and is able to secure passage on a ship back to Scuttlecove.

DC 25 (Friendly): Harliss believes the PCs' story, and may even apologize for any trouble that her first mate might be bringing to the Vanderborens. She encourages the PCs to make haste back to Sasserine and Vanderboren Manor if they want to warn Lavinia about the coming assault, but doubts they'll get there in time. If asked, she'll write a brief note to Drevoraz, ordering him to hold off on the attack, but secretly she knows her half-orc first-mate won't believe the note even if the PCs can deliver it to him. Not long after the PCs leave, she flees to the east as detailed above.

DC 40 (Helpful): Harliss is impressed by the PCs, and gives them one of her marilith earrings as a token to show Drevoraz if they can reach him in time. This is a prearranged code between the two that signals to her first mate that the bearer of her note and the earring is to be trusted. She won't accompany the PCs to Sasserine, since she knows she'll be recognized by the city watch in no time and be thrown in jail, but she does honestly regret sending her man to strike against the Vanderborens if the PCs are this diplomatic. In any case, not long after the PCs leave, she sets out to the east as detailed above.

If the PCs kill Harliss or if she flees before she imparts any or all of the information above, you should take a few moments to prepare a lengthy note as a handout for the PCs to find somewhere on her person or in the nearby area. This note chronicles all

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of the information above, but is addressed to a Crimson Fleet Commander—a missive Harliss intended to send ahead of her return to Scuttlecove to let the Crimson Fleet know as soon as possible what happened in Kraken's Cove.

Note also that if the PCs manage to defeat Harliss, her gear represents a major haul for characters of this level. In this case, you should consider adjusting treasure found for the remainder of this adventure and perhaps the next as appropriate.

PART THREE: THE WORMFALL FESTIVAL

While the PCs frantically rush back to Lavinia after their harrowing encounter with the aftermath of the savage tide, wheels are in motion back in Sasserine. Bullywugs led by Drevoraz, Harliss' half-orc first mate, have descended on the Vanderboren estate, or rather ascended from the canals below, and are now engaged in a pitched battle with the manor's defenders.

The battle has gone largely unnoted by the city at large. The bullywugs have managed to prevent anyone from escaping so far, and as the city itself is deep in the chaotic celebration of the Wormfall Festival, no one has noticed the shouts and sounds of battle that periodically echo out of the manor. In order to reach Vanderboren Manor, the PCs must navigate a city thick with parades and festivity. To make matters worse, the Kellani family, their feathers still ruffled from the PCs' meddling in "There Is No Honor," have hired exotic killers to confront the PCs and extract vengeance for their role in the humiliation of Rowyn Kellani and the disruption of the Lotus Dragon Thieves' Guild.

Wormfall Parade

One year ago, a horrific brush with apocalypse in the far-off city of Alhaster sent deadly ripples across the entire face of the world. Even in Sasserine, the Wormgod's brief emergence into the world had an effect, as monstrous minions boiled out of the Spire of Long Shadows in preparation of the dawn of this new age. Only the intervention of a band of powerful heroes from the neighboring city of Cauldron saved Sasserine from a terrible fate. Now, one year later, Sasserine honors the heroes of that dark day with a wild parade and festival to remember the fallen and rejoice at the victory of good over evil.

Wormfall, as the holiday has been dubbed by city officials, is to be an annual event, a gigantic affair involving troupes of trained acrobats, marching bands, garish costumes in homage of the heroes of Alhaster and Cauldron (and corresponding effigies of their undead and wormy enemies), and floats constructed in the image of enormous green worms and shrouded skulls. Kites of green worms borne on sticks and strings dance in the air above the rooftops. Green lanterns burn above the streets, casting a sickly pale glow upon the cobblestones below, each with a removable shade and a layer of bright gold paper below to bathe the city in the warm sunlight of victory at the exact moment the worms fell and the heroes of Alhaster struck down their foul god.

When the PCs arrive in Sasserine they find the city in the throes of Wormfall and must navigate the teeming crowds of celebrating citizens in order to reach Lavinia's estate. Allow the PCs to trace their route through the city on a map of Sasserine (available in issue #139 or online at paizo.com in the *Savage Tide Player's Guide*), but no matter what route they take they find the going slow and frustrating. And of course, the crowd contains a few surprises for them along the way. You can use the following encounters at any point on the way back to Vanderboren Manor to spice up the journey.

The Belligerent Gnome (EL 5)

Creatures: A gnome by the name of Jilanth Turtoso, normally one of Sasserine's more docile citizens, becomes an unholy terror once he gets his third drink in him. Thankfully, Jilanth has a half-orc buddy named Kurgol with him. Kurgol does his best to keep Jilanth from starting fistfights with every person who crosses his path, but now and then the wily little gnome gets away from him. While the PCs are moving through the crowd, Jilanth targets them for a "bump" so he can accuse them of being "a bunch of rude, oversized louts." After slamming into one of the PCs on purpose, Jilanth huffs and puffs and rolls up his sleeves while Kurgol desperately tries to intervene.

If the PCs apologize for the "insult" by making a DC 20 Diplomacy check, they can hold off a fight long enough for Kurgol to arrive and talk some sense into the drunk gnome. Give the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus on the Diplomacy check if there is a gnome or half-orc in the party, and a +4 if they seem to be a little tipsy themselves or comment on the fun of the festival (Kurgol spent all yesterday volunteering his time setting up for the parade). If the PCs get verbally or physically aggressive with Jilanth, the little gnome immediately attacks. If the PCs inflict lethal damage on Jilanth, Kurgol flies into a rage and attacks them as well. This encounter should pose little physical threat to the PCs, but if handled poorly, the resulting chaos (and possible arrest and jail time if Jilanth or Kurgol is killed) could prevent the PCs from reaching Vanderboren Manor in time.

Jilanth Turtoso, gnome warrior 1: hp 8, *Monster Manual* page 132.

Kurgol, half-orc barbarian 5: hp 43, use the stats for the sample 5th-level barbarian on page 112 of *Dungeon Master's Guide*, except that he carries no weapons. Replace his Weapon Focus (greataxe) feat with Improved Unarmed Strike, giving him unarmed strike +9 melee (1d3+4).

Worm's Revenge (EL 3)

During the height of the celebration, a float-wagon heading downhill bearing a huge humanoid form shrouded in wriggling paper-mache worms and bearing two burning lanterns for eyes rolls out of control toward an open-air tavern filled with revelers. With a DC 15 Listen check, a PC hears the shouts of alarm and has three rounds to react. With a DC 15 Spot check, a PC sees the trundling cart rolling down the hill and has only two rounds to react. If both checks are failed, the PCs automatically notice the runaway float in time to take one round of actions. In any event, the PCs themselves are directly in the path of the run-

away cart. A character may try to halt the careening float's progress by grabbing it (automatic unless the attack to grab the float is a natural 1) and making a DC 25 Strength Check to stop it, by destroying one of its wheels (AC 15, Hardness 5, hp 15), or by creating an obstruction of at least 1,000 pounds (perhaps by toppling a haphazardly-stacked mound of barrels of ale with a DC 20 Strength check). Certain spells, like *web*, *shatter* (targeted at one of the wheels), *soften earth and stone* (cast on the dirt road in front of the float), or *warp wood* can halt the cart's progress as well. If the PCs warn the revelers in the tavern, 1d8 of the 20 can escape out of the float's path each round.

Assume that all of the PCs are in the float's path unless they specifically mentioned that they're spread out. A DC 12 Reflex save allows a PC to leap out of the way of the cart before it strikes them, otherwise it rolls right over them and inflicts 3d6 points of damage.

At the end of the three rounds, the wagon slams into the tavern with a tremendous explosion, sending furniture, dishware and patrons hurling in all directions. Worse, the Wormgod's eye lanterns shatter, spewing flaming oil in all directions and lighting the paper float on fire. Anyone still in the tavern at this time takes 3d6 points of damage—since each reveler has only 5 hit points, this disaster may well result in several deaths if the PCs aren't quick. Once the fire starts, it spreads quickly. The fire is contained by a bucket brigade before it spreads to neighboring buildings, but the tavern itself burns to the ground unless the PCs can organize a bucket brigade faster with a DC 20 Diplomacy check or use magic to aid in putting out the flames. If cast on the first round, a *gust of wind* extinguishes the fire, but after this, the wind only fans the flames. *Pyrotechnics* can transform the fire into an impressive display of fireworks or a choking cloud of smoke if cast within three rounds of the crash.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs stop the float before it crashes, award them as if they'd defeated an EL 3 creature in combat. If the cart crashes but the PCs save at least 15 of the revelers and save the tavern from burning down, give them an EL 1 award.

Kellani's Killers (EL 6)

Angered at the shame the PCs brought upon her daughter Rowyn, and furious at the loss of income generated by the Lotus Dragon Thieves' Guild, aging noblewoman Heldrath Kellani has hired a group of specialized murderers and killers to strike a blow of vengeance against the PCs. Led by a dangerous woman named Diamondback, this group of rogues poses as a band of street performers mounted on stilts and patrols the streets surrounding Vanderboren Manor, waiting for word of the PCs' approach.

Creatures: Diamondback is a deadly performer, late of the Talventa Academy before she decided there was more money in murder-for-hire. Diamondback, decked out in a form-fitting and sensual-if-macabre black bodysuit decorated with a white skeleton, is accompanied by an entourage of six acrobatic rogues who parade about the streets on ten-foot-high stilts. Diamondback precedes the stiltwalkers, dancing and performing an impressive array of acrobatic flips and leaps, while the stiltwalkers themselves wow audiences by juggling daggers and flasks of oil with burning rags stuffed into them. As they approach the PCs, allow them a DC 20 Sense Motive check to notice that the acrobatic troupe seems to be up to no good just before they mount their assault. Those who make the check may act in the surprise round.

DIAMONDBACK **CR 4**

Female human battle dancer 4
CN Medium humanoid
Dragon Compendium 26
Init +5; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 15; Dodge, Mobility
hp 25 (4 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +9, **Will** +0

Spd 40 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +9 (1d8+1)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5
Special Actions dance of reckless bravery
Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of eagle's splendor* (both already used)

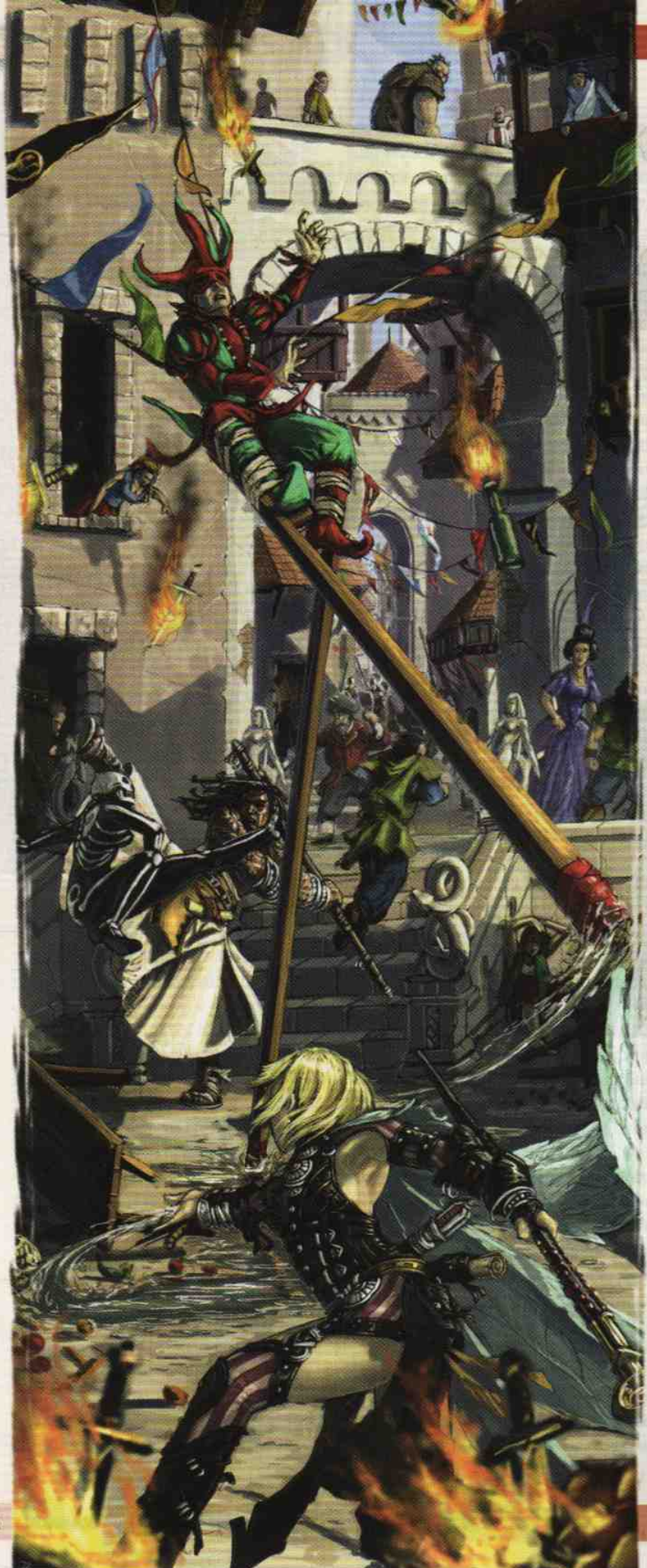
Abilities Str 12, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 18
SQ AC bonus
Feats Dodge, Mobility, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +12, Escape Artist +10, Jump +14, Perform (dance) +11, Tumble +12
Possessions combat gear, *ring of protection +1*, black skeletal leotard, jade serpent earrings worth 500 gp as a pair

AC Bonus (Ex) Diamondback adds her Charisma bonus to her Armor Class; this bonus applies even against touch attacks or when she is flat-footed, but she looses the bonus if immobilized or helpless, when she wears armor, when she carries a shield, or when she carries a medium or heavy load.
Dance of Reckless Bravery (Su) Diamondback can inspire bravery in her allies by taking

How's the Weather Up There?

Although stilts are designed for performances, for an agile user they can grant unique advantages in combat. Stilts are generally ten feet tall, placing a character on stilts out of reach of melee attacks from most Medium creatures. With a DC 10 Balance check, a character can move at his normal speed while wearing stilts; failure by 5 or more indicates a fall for 1d6 damage. A character on stilts can move through crowds with ease, and generally gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls with melee weapons against Large or smaller creatures due to the advantage of higher ground (although the stiltwalker generally needs reach weapons to target Medium creatures).

A foe can attempt to sunder a stilt as if it were a weapon. A stilt has hardness 5 and 10 hit points, and each time it is struck, the stiltwalker must make a DC 12 Balance check to avoid a fall. If a stilt is destroyed, the stiltwalker automatically falls. While on stilts, you suffer a –4 penalty to resist bull rush, overrun, and trip attempts, but you may substitute your Balance check in place of the normal check to resist the attack if you wish.



a move action while within an opponent's threatened area. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. All of her allies within 30 feet gain a +4 bonus on saves against fear effects for a number of rounds equal to 5 + her Charisma modifier (currently 9 rounds).

STILTWALKERS (6) **CR 1**

Male and female human rogue 1
CN Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11
hp 8 (1 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20) or alchemist's fire +2 touch (1d6 fire)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear 2 flasks of alchemist's fire

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ trapfinding
Feats Agile, Skill Focus (Balance)
Skills Balance +11, Bluff +3, Escape Artist +8, Jump +5, Listen +5, Perform (juggling) +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +5, Tumble +6
Possessions combat gear, padded armor, stilts, 4 daggers

Tactics: Diamondback and her killers are well acquainted with the PCs' appearances, and unless they go to great lengths to disguise themselves as they move toward Lavinia's mansion, the killers strike at some point before they reach it. Diamondback drinks her two potions before she approaches the group from behind and attacks the last character in line. At this attack, the stiltwalkers each throw a flask of alchemist's fire at the PCs, hoping the resulting explosions of fire damage them and cause a swath of chaos in the streets.

The attack works like a charm. For the following 2d4 rounds, panicked crowds fill the square. The stiltwalkers can move through the crowd with ease, but all other characters treat movement through the crowd as difficult terrain. Diamondback tries to stay within five feet of her chosen target at all times, tumbling away to find a different target if reinforcements arrive.

As soon as a rogue or Diamondback is brought below 4 hit points, he or she

attempts to flee into the crowd. If cornered, a badly wounded villain surrenders.

Development: It takes the city watch a few minutes to respond to the attack, likely giving the PCs plenty of time to become scarce. Even if they remain at the scene of the fight, the large number of witnesses are more than enough to convince the watch that the PCs were only defending themselves. With a DC 10 Diplomacy check, the guards let the PCs go after only a few minutes of questioning. A captured rogue or Diamondback readily gives up the identity of their employers if interrogated. Legal action against the Kellanis is unfortunately a bureaucratic nightmare beyond the scope of this adventure, but this assault combined with any evidence the PCs uncovered in the Lotus Dragon Guildhall in "There Is No Honor" goes a long way toward stripping the Kellanis of their noble status. In any event, after this failed attack, Heldrath washes her hands of the PCs, realizing they're too tough to tangle with. If her daughter Rowyn still lives, though, she has further plans for revenge that see fruition in the next adventure.

PART FOUR: FROGS IN THE HOUSE

When Captain Harliss Javell gave her first mate the orders to seek out the Vanderborens and extract punishment for Vanthus' treachery, she suggested to the half-orc he recruit several members of the Trub Glorp bullywug tribe as thugs. The Trub Glorp tribe dwells in the swamp south of Kraken's Cove, and have a long-standing alliance with the pirates of the Crimson Fleet. Drevoraz was able to secure the aid of the entire tribe (along with one of their pets) for the raid. Fortunately for the PCs, this significantly slowed Drevoraz's journey to Sasserine. Forced to make the last legs of the journey under stealth, the bullywugs arrived at Vanderboren Manor only a few hours before the PCs arrive, invading the mansion via a short creek that passes through the basement.

It wasn't long before the invaders clashed with the Jade Ravens, another adventuring party employed by Lavinia. Further, Lavinia herself, perhaps inspired by the PCs, has taken up her interest in fencing and has honed her skills as a swashbuckler. She and the Jade Ravens put up a terrific fight in the manor courtyard, but the bullywugs eventually defeated them, capturing most and sending one of the Ravens into desperate hiding before they settled in to wait for Vanthus' arrival.

The majority of the bullywugs encountered in Vanderboren Manor are Trub Glorp hunters, rangers possessing a burning hatred of all things human. A bullywug is a froglike humanoid with green, gray, or mottled yellow skin. They have long, flicking tongues and typically speak with thick, sloppy accents. They stand four to seven feet tall, weigh 100 to 300 pounds, and reek of the swamp. Bullywugs are fanatic creatures loyal to their tribe; they fight to the death. Note that these bullywugs have already taken some damage in the fight to wrestle the manor away from the Jade Ravens and Lavinia. When encountered, a Trub Glorp hunter has already taken 1d6 points of damage. Named bullywugs are at full hit points, as they held back from the initial fights or have already been healed by their shaman, Bua Gorg.

Trub Glorp Hunter **CR 1**

Male and female bullywug ranger 1
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic)
Monsters of Faerûn 25
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 12 (–1d6, 1 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** –1

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; marsh move
Melee club +3 (1d6+2)
Ranged throwing axe +3 (1d6+2)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3
Atk Options favored enemy +2 (human)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 4
SQ amphibious, wild empathy –2
Feats Alertness, Track
Skills Hide +6 (+12 in marshes), Jump +6, Listen +1, Spot +1, Survival +3, Swim +14
Possessions leather armor, club, 3 throwing axes

Amphibious (Ex) Although bullywugs are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely out of water.
Marsh Move (Ex) A bullywug suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.

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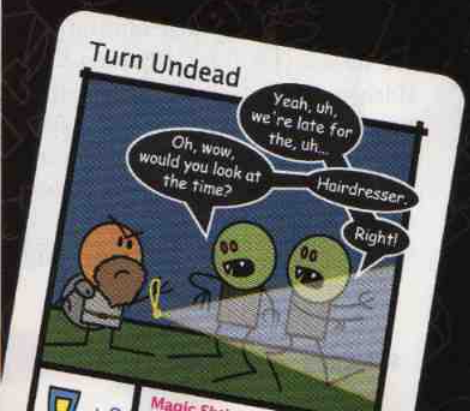

Vanderboren Manor

The bullywugs have posted no guards outside of Vanderboren Manor so as to not draw attention to the grounds during their invasion, making it relatively simple for the PCs to approach the manor. If they approach openly, there's a 20% chance that a bullywug notices them through one of the manor's windows and raises the alarm—any attempt at stealth negates this chance entirely.

You should provide the PCs with a map of Vanderboren Manor to help them plan the rescue mission—they've likely been to the mansion numerous times by now, and while they may not have visited every room in the building, they should be familiar with its layout. The manor itself is a well-made structure. Bullywugs lack darkvision or low-light vision, so if the assault occurs at night they've lit the manor's numerous wall-mounted lamps. Doors are made of wood and are unlocked unless otherwise indicated in the text.

The following room descriptions assume the bullywugs are not aware of the PCs. If the alarm is raised, refer to that room's Development section to note any changes to the room's condition.

Without concrete proof that bullywugs have invaded Sasserine, the city watch has little time or resources to devote to aiding the PCs in their task. With the Wormfall Festival in full swing, they've got their hands full keeping things in relative order as it is. PCs who waste time trying to organize an army of guards to assault the manor may well find that they're too late to save its occupants.

Note on Treasure: Although many of these rooms list objects as treasure, honorable parties won't loot their employer's home. If your party is working for Rowyn, she may ask the PCs to steal as much of this treasure as they can during their infiltration of the manor (see the "Switching Sides" sidebar at the start of this adventure). Note that many of the treasures in Vanderboren Manor are trophies from noteworthy and infamous adventure sites throughout the world—the Vanderborens have a proud family tradition as adventurers, and the decor of their manor reflects some of their more obscure finds.

V1. Atrium (EL 3)

This enormous great hall's marble stonework is smooth and white. Two oak stairwells with burnished brass railings ascend to an open first-floor landing. Tapestries depicting a beautiful and savage frontier of sprawling jungle landscapes and an eerie shoreline hang from the upper landing. A glass chandelier hangs from the atrium's ceiling.

Creatures: Three Trub Glorp hunters stand watch here, two on the ground floor between the stairwells and one patrolling the first floor landing. The two downstairs hunters stand directly under the chandelier; if the chandelier's rope is cut, its fall strikes the bullywugs for 2d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 12 half).

Trub Glorp Hunters (3): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Tactics: The bullywugs rush any discernable threat they notice, raising the alarm as they attack.

Development: If the alarm is raised, the bullywugs hide behind tapestries and prepare to ambush anyone who moves through the atrium.

V2. Statuary

This marble-floored room contains many fine sculptures of Vanderboren ancestors, long dead friends, and important personages. A partially-finished statue of Lavinia's parents, Verik and Larissa Vanderboren, stands in the center of the chamber. Their visages are incomplete from the nose down, so that their eyes stare outward toward the viewer, with no mouths to speak the secrets of their lives and deaths.

Treasure: On a marble pedestal near the south wall sits a gem-studded ceremonial silver dragon engraved with the stylized depiction of an obscure demigod of earth, weather, and hidden treasure known as the Earth Dragon. The statue is worth 1,100 gp. On another pedestal sits an odd golden likeness of half of a cow's head with a ruby eye worth 800 gp.

V3. Library

Row upon row of bookshelves filled to bursting with tomes on all manner of subjects line this room. A hearth sits against the north wall, embers glowing softly within. A reading table sits near the fireplace.

An old musty diary written in a strange archaic language (Suel) rests on the reading table, the initials "L. of G." burned into the cover. The diary's current page is marked with a strange card of flexible gray material with bumps and holes along its surface.

Treasure: The card of gray material is an unusual key that opens doors in an exotic and distant dungeon of metal hidden deep in the Barrier Peaks, and is useless to the PCs except as a curiosity worth 15 gp.

V4. Study

An impressive darkwood desk with a high-backed chair behind it sits in this spacious study.

This is where Lavinia's mother and father took important meetings with close friends, economic advisors, and members of the Seeker Lodge. The large office has gone unused for weeks.

V5. Gallery

This dismal excuse for a gallery obviously once held dozens of works, but now most of the frames stand empty, save a few exotic landscapes and a portrait of Lavinia's parents.

The contents of this room suffered recently, as Lavinia was forced to sell most of the paintings herein to collectors and merchants to pay off the most critical of her inherited debts.

V6. Trophy Hall (EL 3)

This exhibit hall displays many hunting trophies, all well-preserved by taxidermy. Great

Vanderboren Manor
Ground Floor
Second Floor
First Floor
Basement
One square = 5 feet
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The Jade Ravens

The PCs aren't the only adventurers in Lavinia's employ. The Jade Ravens consist of a group of mercenaries and adventurers who have served the Vanderborens for many years. Traditionally, as members of this group became higher level, they went their own ways after recruiting new members to replace themselves. The current group consists of four 3rd-level NPCs. Having just returned from the nearby city of Cauldron with monetary aid from Vanderboren relations there, the Jade Ravens were present to aid in the initial defense of the manor against the bullywugs. Unfortunately, they were overwhelmed and are now scattered throughout the manor, either hostages or unconscious. As the PCs encounter them, they can rescue these NPCs and thus recruit additional aid in reclaiming the manor. How the PCs interact with the Jade Ravens here has repercussions throughout the rest of the Savage Tide Adventure Path. Will they be allies? Or will they become bitter rivals?

Tolin Kientai (LN male human ranger 3): The self-proclaimed leader of the group, Tolin is as vain and brash as he is handsome. He may take an interest in an attractive female PC, although his ego might make him difficult to get along with.

Zan Oldavin (N male half-elf rogue 3): A jaunty, flamboyant man who takes perhaps too keen an interest in his dagger collection, Zan's carefree and sometimes irresponsible attitude tends to get all four of the Jade Ravens into trouble with the authorities.

Kaskus Kiel (LN male dwarf druid 3): Kaskus has a deep and noisy love of mountains and caverns, and longs to return there some day after he's repaid a debt of loyalty to Lavinia, whose father rescued Kaskus from slavery to the Scarlet Brotherhood nearly a year ago.

Liamae Teslikaria (CN female human sorcerer 3): Liamae is a somewhat haughty woman, a rebel against her noble parents, who ran away from home to the exotic south to experience what life has to offer. She may become romantically involved with an attractive PC, but her capricious and sometimes self-destructive lifestyle might put long-term relationships under undue strain.

saber-toothed cats, a crouching deinonychus, a bloated toad the size of a pony, and a strange badger-like creature with golden fur and eight legs round out a menagerie of more mundane leopards, wolves, and bears. The carpet in this room is terribly stained with mud, especially around a door in the northeast corner of the room.

The door in the northeastern corner of the room leads down to the basement. The mud stains are from the bullywugs who invaded the manor from below; a DC 20 Survival check by a character with Track reveals many webbed footprints in the mud stains.

The secret door into area **V15** can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check.

Creatures: Three bullywug hunters have taken a liking to the stuffed dire toad, and have gathered around it while they guard this room. They attack anyone who enters the room.

Trub Glorp Hunters (3): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Development: The bullywugs hide behind the dire toad trophy if the alarm is raised. A strange "blourp!" sound emitted from behind the toad a split second before they leap out to attack is the only warning the PCs get if they fail to notice the hiding bullywugs before they attack.

V7. Courtyard

A plethora of exotic flowers and plants populate this lush courtyard. A small pond dotted with water lilies sits at the center of the courtyard, a gentle stream draining away to the north. Benches and a stone table with an intricate marble and iron dragonchess set built into its surface complete the idyllic scene, which is marred here and there by splashes of blood on the grass or walls. Three froglike bodies lie in a heap on the southern shore of the pond next to a dead badger.

Three dead bullywugs, one riddled with throwing knives, another smote with a blunt blow to the head, and a third badly riddled with deep holes caused by *magic missiles* lie about the pond. The Jade Ravens made their last stand here, and managed to kill three of the bullywugs before they were overwhelmed and scattered throughout the manor. The dead badger was Kaskus's animal companion (see area **V15**).

V8. Kennels (EL 3)

Four locked cage-stalls fill the northern portion of this room. The air reeks of unkempt dogs.

Creatures: Three mastiff hounds named Leshton, Ealia, and Kurz, diligently raised as hunting dogs by Lavinia's father, are kept here. Normally, the dogs had free run of the estate most of the time, but they were kenneled at the time the bullywugs struck and no one was able to release them. The dogs are agitated and whimper with fear—they can smell the bullywugs in the mansion, and if released, the faithful dogs want nothing more than to defend their masters' home from the intruding monsters.

They growl at any PCs who approach and bark loudly (the bullywugs have been ignoring the dogs' incessant barking since their arrival, so this does not draw any investigation by the frogmen). If calmed with a DC 15 wild empathy or Handle Animal check, the dogs obey the party, though they rush to attack any bullywugs they encounter.

Mastiffs (3): hp 16 each, *Monster Manual* 272 (riding dog).

V9. Storage

This large closet is filled with cleaning supplies, blankets, sheets, pillows, and other necessities of the household.

V10. Servant's Quarters

This simple room contains a few narrow beds and a single free-standing dresser.

These simple 10-foot-by-10-foot rooms are where the Vanderboren serving staff resides. Lavinia hasn't had a chance yet to rehire a full staff, so the only denizen of this room is her loyal major-domo, Kora Whistlegap, who unfortunately has not survived the bullywug invasion—her body can be found in area **V27**.

V11. Ballroom

This large chamber was used to entertain the Vanderboren's guests in bygone days. Now this area contains only a long dining table, an empty buffet table, and a few well-worn chairs.

Like the gallery, much of the finery that once decorated this ballroom has been sold to pay off several debts.

V12. Private Dining Hall (EL 6)

This spacious room is filled with comfortable upholstered chairs, bookshelves, and a few tables. A window overlooks the manor's central courtyard and the carpet is thick and soft. A large portrait hangs on one wall, a fine work depicting a handsome young man with a short beard and a sneer on his face.

Creatures: Huntress Lorb-Lorb Tub, a mottled brown and green bullywug wearing mismatched studded leather armor, relaxes here with three of her hunters. She is the mate of Chief Lorpth and a powerful personage in the Trub Glorp tribe. The huntress finds this whole affair ridiculous, and has refused to take an active part in the raid, instead becoming thoroughly distracted by a box of fine cigars in this room. She smokes them at her leisure and greets any PCs who enter with a slime-drooling smile and a puff before ordering her hunters to attack. She does not attack until at least one of her hunters falls or she is herself attacked, at which point she rages and fights to the death.

Huntress Lorb-Lorb Tub CR 5
Female bullywug barbarian 2/ranger 3
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic)
Monsters of Faerûn 25
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18; uncanny dodge
hp 57 (5 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; marsh move
Melee +1 *hand axe* +9 (1d6+3/×3) or
+1 *hand axe* +7 (1d6+3/×3) and
+1 *hand axe* +7 (1d6+2/×3)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7
Atk Options favored enemy +2 (human), rage 1/day
Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +3

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
SQ amphibious, wild empathy +2
Feats Endurance, Track, Two Weapon Defense, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (handaxe)
Skills Climb +10, Hide +4 (+10 in swamps), Jump +10, Swim +10, Survival +2
Possessions combat gear, studded leather armor, 2 +1 *hand axes*

Amphibious (Ex) Although bullywugs are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely out of water.
Marsh Move (Ex) A bullywug suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.
Rage (Ex) When she rages, Lorb-Lorb Tub's stats change as follows:
AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16
hp 67
Fort +13, **Will** +2
Melee +1 *hand axe* +11 (1d6+5/×3) or
+1 *hand axe* +9 (1d6+5/×3) and
+1 *hand axe* +9 (1d6+3/×3)
Grp +9
Abilities Str 19, Con 24
Skills Jump +12, Swim +12

Trub Glorp Hunters (3): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Tactics: The hunters and Lorb-Lorb Tub both attempt to flank opponents. Lorb-Lorb Tub is the smartest of the bullywugs in the mansion and fights in a manner demonstrative of both her canny hunter's instincts and intellect. Lorb-Lorb Tub is also not stupid enough to fight to the death and attempts to flee if reduced to less than 10 hit points. If cornered, she hurls down her weapons and begs for mercy.

Development: If the alarm is raised, Lorb-Lorb Tub ignores it and continues testing cigars. Her hunters grow more nervous, but dare not disobey the chieftain's mate.

If captured alive, Lorb-Lorb Tub offers to tell the PCs all she knows about her mate Chief Lorpth, Bua Gorg, and the half-orc stranger in exchange for her life. She can tell the PCs exact numbers and the locations of the other bullywugs, but won't aid in fighting them.

V13. Washroom

This room contains a matching large bathtub and washbasin.

Area V14. Privy

Beyond three fine porcelain lavatories that empty into a series of pipes that likely drain into the nearby canal, there is nothing of interest in this room.

V15. Hidden Armory

The walls of this stone-floored room are lined with weapon and armor racks, many of which are empty. Still remaining on the walls are a silvery bastard sword, a light crossbow, a glowing dagger, a suit of studded leather armor, a light steel shield, and a small wooden coffer. The wooden coffer lies on its side, the lid open and its contents (several potion vials and a pair of boots) strewn on the floor. Slumped on the ground nearby is what appears to be a recently slain dwarf.

This hidden armory is where the Vanderborens keep several of their spare weapons, stored here in case of an emergency. Unfortunately, neither the Jade Ravens nor Lavinia were able to reach this room in time for its contents to make a difference during the bullywug attack.

Creature: The dwarf druid Kaskus Kiel managed to hide in this room after the other Jade Ravens were captured. Unfortunately, the wounded druid didn't know about the *magic missile* trap that once warded the coffer of healing potions, and in his frenzied attempt to get to the contents he triggered the trap and was nearly slain. As fortune would have it, the dwarf stabilized naturally at –7 hit points. If the PCs can heal him, he frantically recounts the battle for the manor (including a tearful account of the death of his animal companion Brunthus at the hands of that damn half-orc). Kaskus readily agrees to join the PCs in their task of reclaiming the manor.

Kaskus Kiel **CR 3**
Male dwarf druid 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Dwarven, Druidic, Sylvan
AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 26 (currently –7, 3 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5
Spd 20 ft.
Melee scimitar +2 (1d6/18–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Combat Gear *potion of expeditious retreat*
Spells Prepared (CL 3rd, +2 melee touch, +3 ranged touch)
2nd—*bull's strength* (already cast), *cure moderate wounds* (already cast)
1st—*cure light wounds* (already cast), *longstrider*, *produce flame* (already cast)
0—*cure minor wounds* (2, both already cast), *guidance* (already cast), *light*
Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 6
SQ wild empathy +1
Feats Augment Summoning, Spell Focus (conjuration)
Skills Concentration +9, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +8, Spot +8, Survival +4 (+6 nature)
Possessions combat gear, +1 *hide armor*, +1 *heavy wooden shield*, scimitar, *goggles of minute seeing*, 35 gp

Treasure: The weapons and armor in this room are of masterwork quality. The glowing dagger is in fact a +1 *keen dagger*. Four of the potions that were once in the coffer are smashed, but four *potions of cure moderate wounds* survive intact. The boots are *boots of striding and springing*.

V16. Guest Rooms

This chamber is furnished with a bed, a low desk, and a free-standing dresser.

There is nothing of interest in these chambers.

V17. Laboratory

Alchemical and vivisection tools and all manner of glassware are scattered about on three or four tables in this windowless room. The fireplace is constructed with a brass grating fitted with slots to accommodate glass test tubes for heating.

This room is where biological samples gathered on the Vanderborens' many explorative journeys are kept, and where they created alchemical concoctions and potions. Lavinia's mother Larissa used this room often, but since her death the chamber hasn't been visited in over a month.

Treasure: A shelf on the north wall has the following samples in glass jars: a shrunken head of a simian humanoid (a tasloi) worth 20 gp, a bulbous green worm floating in alchemical preservative worth 50 gp, a strange one-eyed bat-like thing mounted on a board and whose body gives off an eerie soft glow worth 100 gp, and a piece of stretched leathery skin bearing a tattoo of an eye with an arrow crossed over it (this last is a patch of half-fiend skin that bears the notorious Carcerian Sign) worth 25 gp.

V18. Family Shrine

A large stone disk carved with the road and crescent moon of Fharlanghn is set into the wall above a modest altar heaped with offerings of dried fruit and other strange objects.

Although the Vanderborens have traditionally been a secular family, the worship of Fharlanghn remained a well-loved tradition in the family. Lavinia has not visited this shrine in weeks, and everything here is covered with a layer of dust.

Treasure: The offerings here include several sprigs of cinnamon worth 5 gp in all, a rare and preserved orchid worth 10 gp, an ruby brooch in the shape of a bat worth 300 gp, a small silver offering bowl with a crescent-shaped base made of bone worth 60 gp filled with fine dates from a far off desert (the dates are worth 20 gp in all), and a carved white oak *staff of passage* (1 charge remaining).

V19. Training Hall

This large open room is devoid of furniture, save a weapons rack containing several quality weapons, including three longswords, an axe, two daggers, four rapiers, a strange-looking crossbow, a ranseur, and a spiked chain. The floor is thickly carpeted to absorb the shock of a fall or takedown. The bodies of four froglike humanoids lie sprawled on the floor.

These four bullywugs were cut down in a valiant effort by Tolin Kientai and Kaskus Kiel before they were subdued and brought upstairs with the rest of the hostages. The weapons on the racks are all of masterwork quality; the strange-looking crossbow is, in fact, a +1 *repeating crossbow*.

V20. Laundry (EL 2)

This white paneled room is filled with basins and hampers. A large tub of water sits in the middle of the room, and numerous cords hung with clothespins lace the ceiling.

This is where the staff washes linens and clothing.

Creatures: Two bullywug hunters sift through the hampers here, searching for more fine silk robes. Bua Gorg, the bullywug cleric in area **V27** above, has taken a liking to these soft garments and plans on taking as many as possible back to his lair in the swamps. The bullywugs battle to the death to protect their master's "treasure."

Trub Glorp Hunters (2): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Development: If the alarm is raised, these two hunters move out onto the balcony (area **V21**) to watch for intruders.

V21. Balcony

This open-air balcony overlooks the corner of the Vanderboren Grounds, providing an excellent view of the city of Sasserine. Three reed chairs sit near the railing.

Development: The two bullywug hunters in are **V20** crouch here if the alarm is raised, watching the streets for any sign of reinforcements.

V22. Kitchen

Stoves, basins, and preparation counters fill up this cramped chamber. This kitchen is large enough to prepare a banquet.

Although the kitchen is sizable, it has been underused since the deaths of Lavinia's parents. The only evidence of recent occupation is a small wheel of Lavinia's favorite cheese (Hollowsky port) and a loaf of hardened bread. Even the wine rack is empty (Lavinia sold off some of the bottles and Vanthus drank the rest during his short stay in the manor immediately after their parents' death).

V23. Basement (EL 7)

Water from the central pool in the courtyard flows through this room, cascading through a grate in the south wall and then out through a second grate to the north. This second grate is nearly completely rusted through; only a few jagged shards of metal remain. Great swaths of mud stain the floor here.

This is where the bullywugs invaded Vanderboren Manor. Chief Lorpth used his pet rust monster to eat through the grate to allow access to the room from the creek. A Medium or smaller creature can still use this missing grate to enter and exit the Vanderboren Estate relatively unnoticed.

The muddy floor is difficult to walk through, and is treated as difficult terrain. Remember: bullywugs can move through mud like this with no penalty.

When the PCs first reach this area, the sounds of deep slobbery laughter, a woman's cries of distress, and a weird trilling chitter echo into the area from the chamber to the east.

Creatures: Chief Lorpth has taken the basement as his personal headquarters during the incursion. He has no interest in the finery of pinkskins, and enjoys the mud down here (he's homesick already). He's had three of his hunters bring in buckets of water and mud to transform the ground here into a soupy approximation of the swamp he misses so much.

While he waits for his kin and Drevoraz to finish with their business upstairs, and while his mate works her way through the cigars in area **V12**, Chief Lorpth has decided to have a little fun down here in the basement. He's pulled a large overstuffed chair from the ballroom above down here, setting it up in the southwest corner of the basement so he can watch as his pet rust monster Chunkus (the source of the strange chittering sound) torments a distraught human woman.

This is Liamae Teslikaria, one of the Jade Ravens. Having cast almost all of her prepared spells and loosing her dagger to Chunkus' hunger, Liamae has been biding her time for the opportunity to escape her bloated captor. Until then, Chief Lorpth has forced her to perform a demeaning game for his entertainment—she has been forced to wear nothing more than a tattered sheet into which the bullywugs have threaded nearly two dozen pieces of silverware. Chief Lorpth promised Liamae that if she can keep at least one piece of silverware away from Chunkus until he and his kin are set to leave, he'll let her go. If Chunkus gets all of the spoons and forks, he's promised to eat her. Liamae's down to only three spoons and a single fork, and by the time the PCs arrive she's desperate enough to try to escape, using her last spell to distract the Chief long enough to make a run for it. Covered with rust monster bites, she sees the arrival of the PCs as her chance and immediately casts her last *charm person* at Chief Lorpth.

Chief Lorpth **CR 5**
Male bullywug fighter 5
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic)
Monsters of Faerûn 25
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 18 touch 11, flat-footed 18
hp 57 (5 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; marsh move
Melee* +1 *greatclub* +7 (1d10+13)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +8
Atk Options Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack
Combat Gear *potion of shield of faith +2, potion of cure moderate wounds, salve of slipperiness*
*3-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 11
SQ amphibious
Feats Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub), Weapon Specialization (greatclub)
Skills Hide –1 (+5 in swamps), Intimidate +8
Possessions combat gear, *+1 hide armor*, *+1 greatclub*, wooden crown fitted with seven moonstones (each worth 100 gp)

Amphibious (Ex) Although bullywugs are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely out of water.
Marsh Move (Ex) A bullywug suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.

Liamae Teslikaria **CR 3**
Female human sorcerer 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Dwarven, Druidic, Sylvan

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10
hp 12 (currently 3, 3 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +0 (1d3)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +0
Spells Known (CL 3rd, +3 ranged touch)
1st (6/day, 1 remaining)—*charm person* (DC 14), *magic missile*, *shield*
0 (6/day, 3 remaining)—*acid splash*, *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 15
SQ summon familiar (Rat named Scabies, currently deceased)
Feats Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Spell Focus (enchantment)
Skills Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Spellcraft +8

Chunkus, rust monster: hp 27; *Monster Manual* 216.

Trub Glorp Hunters (2): hp 12 each; see page 33.

Tactics: Chief Lorpth commands Chunkus to attack the most heavily armored foe (an unnecessary command, given Chunkus's ravenous appetite) and his three minions to gather around him to prevent the PCs from flanking him. Chief Lorpth has a vastly over-inflated opinion of his combat skills, and uses

Power Attack even if he's regularly not hitting a foe. The bullywugs fight to the death, but Chunkus waddles off into a corner to eat if given a sizable chunk of metal to gnaw on.

Treasure: Chief Lorpth has stacked Liamae's gear in a pile next to his impromptu throne. This consists of a *ring of protection +1*, a *potion of false life*, a *wand of mage armor* with 10 charges, a *wand of shocking grasp* with 30 charges, and 78 gp.

Development: Liamae gratefully thanks them if she survives, and can quickly fill the PCs in on what happened over the last few hours. She was cut off from the other Jade Ravens after the battle in the courtyard turned sour, and is quite worried about their well-being. She's also concerned about Lavinia, but not to the same extent.

V24. Reservoir

This chamber contains several twisting pipes and a large water container.

The mansion's water supply is stored here, and can be pumped up from the container into the kitchen above as needed.

V25. Lavinia's Room

Tall windows overlook the city of Sasserine to the west and south from this spacious bedroom, which features a large, four-poster bed made with frilly, lacy sheets and heaped with pillows. Several of the sheets and pillows lie scattered across the floor, and a bloody handprint with webbed fingers mars the wall near the door; additional bloodstains and muddy footprints stain the carpet in places. A dead frogman lies slumped against a desk in the northwest corner of the room.

This chamber has been Lavinia's since childhood, and is filled with her clothes and accoutrements. Though by all rights she should now be keeping her quarters in the master bedroom, Lavinia is not comfortable doing so and hasn't yet moved out of this room. The bullywugs, many of which were already wounded in their fight with the Jade Ravens, found Lavinia to be a tougher catch than they'd realized, and she managed to kill one of them before they subdued her.

V26. Vanthus' Room

This large bedroom is clean, well-ordered, and almost sterile in appearance; it's obvious that no one's used this chamber in weeks.

This is where Vanthus kept his quarters in the manor, although he hasn't slept here in well over a month. His bed is a luxuriant four-poster affair with silk drapes and satin sheets. A reading table and cabinet sit against one wall, a bar with various (now empty) bottles of wine and liquor and a collection of fine drinking vessels, one of which is a tankard with the words "Grog's" engraved on it.

Treasure: Inside the cabinet is a gold ring with a rounded blue stone worth 150 gp, a large ivory key worth 60 gp, and a collection of strange signet pins of various colors and crests (a mushroom on one, a whip on another, a pair of spiders on a third). The whole collection of pins is worth 100 gp in all.

V27. Master Bedroom (EL 8)

This room is dark and cloying; the shutters are closed, and the air smells of a rank combination of body odor and swamp mud. The desk, chairs, and most other furniture in this room have all been draped with white canvas dust covers, giving this room the eerie feeling of a tomb. Only the large four-poster bed in the northwest corner of the room has been uncovered, its dust covers lying in a heap at the side.

Creatures: Having secured the manor as best he can, Drevoraz Kabran claimed this room as a place to wait for Vanthus to return to the manor. After she was captured, Lavinia managed to convince Drevoraz that she'd heard from Vanthus, that he was en route to Sasserine and should be arriving home by the end of the day. Her plan to delay Drevoraz worked, as he now plans on executing Lavinia and the Jade Ravens in front of Vanthus before he murders the treacherous Vanderboren himself, assuming that he'll arrive in a few short hours. Drevoraz relaxes on the bed, passing the time alternately reading a racy novel he swiped from the library and tormenting the prisoners to fight off boredom before Vanthus's arrival. Also present in the room is the disgusting spiritual leader of the Trub Glorp bullywug tribe—a cleric named Bua Gorg. This bloated bullywug has soaked one of the dustsheets in water and now sits on an overstuffed chair in the northeast corner of the room, swaddled in the soaking sheet for comfort as he offers prayers to his demonic patron, Dagon.

Four hostages are tied to chairs, back to back, in the center of the room. The hostages include Lavinia, two of the Jade Ravens (Tolin Kientai and Zan Oldavin), and Kora Whistlegap, Lavinia's one remaining house servant. Of the four, only Lavinia is conscious, regarding her captors silently with eyes narrowed in fury. Tolin and Zan are both stable but unconscious at –4 hit points. Poor Kora is dead, her throat cut by Drevoraz in a brutal display of power intended to cow the other three prisoners into compliance.

Drevoraz is a muscular half-orc dressed in studded leather and decorated with numerous tattoos. Two years ago Drevoraz, then a lowly deckswabbing rogue onboard the *Sea Wyvern*, distinguished himself by taking a crossbow bolt to the right eye in a fight but plowed on through to the end, saving Captain Javell herself from an enemy's blade. Captain Javell immediately promoted him to first mate, and since then the half-orc has served the captain with unwavering loyalty.

Bua Gorg is the most grotesque bullywug of his tribe, with sickly yellowish skin and sagging throat pouch, disgustingly deflated after an enemy tribesman's spear punctured it. Now when the priest breathes heavily in delighted anticipation of bloodshed, his ruptured throat pouch sucks and dribbles noisily. Bua Gorg thoroughly enjoys the perks of his position, and has already made a mental list of finery

he would like dragged back to the swamp from the manor for his enjoyment. He worships the demon lord of the briny depths, Dagon, although much of his religious dogma is self-taught and based on his own sadistic pleasures.

Drevoraz Kabran **CR 6**
Male half-orc fighter 6
LN Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common, Orc

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Dodge
hp 43 (6 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *scimitar* +13/+8 (1d6+10/18–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +11

Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6
Feats Athletic, Dodge, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)
Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +2, Profession (sailor) +9, Swim +12
Possessions masterwork studded leather, +1 *scimitar*, *belt of ogre power* (as *gauntlets of ogre power*), 17 gp

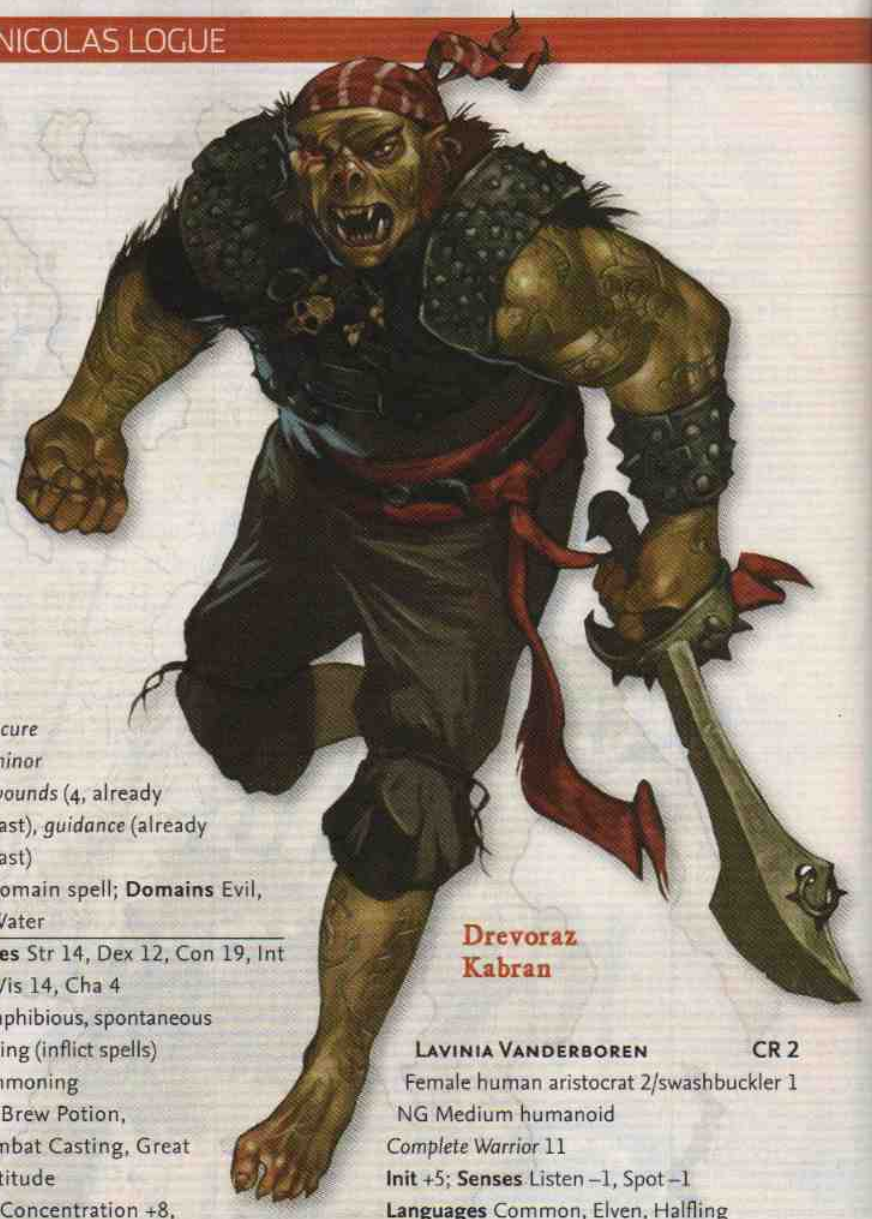
Bua Gorg **CR 6**
Male bullywug cleric 6 (Dagon)
CN Medium humanoid (aquatic)
Monsters of Faerûn 25
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16
hp 54 (6 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; marsh move
Melee mwk spear +7 (1d8+3/×3)
Ranged mwk spear +6 (1d8+3/×3)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6
Combat Gear *wand of cure light wounds* (8 charges), *potion of sanctuary*
Spells Prepared (CL 6th)
3rd—*cure serious wounds* (already cast), *magic circle against good*[D] (already cast), *summon monster III*
2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2, 1 already cast), *fog cloud*[D] (already cast), *silence* (already cast), *summon monster II* (already cast)
1st—*command* (already cast), *cure light wounds* (2, already cast), *obscuring mist*[D], *summon monster I*
0—*cure minor wounds* (4, already cast), *guidance* (already cast)
D domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Water

Abilities Str 14, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 4
SQ amphibious, spontaneous casting (inflict spells) summoning
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude
Skills Concentration +8, Heal +7, Hide +1 (+7 in marshes)
Possessions combat gear, +1 *leather armor*, masterwork spear, *periapt of Wisdom +2*

Amphibious (Ex) Although bullywugs are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely out of water.
Marsh Move (Ex) A bullywug suffers no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.
Summoning (Su) Bullywug clerics are notorious for their powerful but unpredictable summoning abilities. When a bullywug cleric casts a *summon monster* spell, there is a 50% chance that one more monster than the spell would ordinarily summon appears. In such cases, there is then a 25% chance that the summoned monsters are not under the bullywug's control, and attack random targets.


Drevoraz Kabran

Lavinia Vanderboren **CR 2**
Female human aristocrat 2/swashbuckler 1
NG Medium humanoid
Complete Warrior 11
Init +5; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10
hp 20 (currently 18, 3 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +2 (1d3)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 15
Feats Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Finesse
Skills Appraise +7, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +7, Perform (stringed instrument) +7, Sense Motive +7, Tumble +4

Tolin Kientai **CR 3**
Male human ranger 3
LN Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 0
hp 17 (–4 currently, 3 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d3+2)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12
SQ wild empathy +6
Feats Endurance, Improved Initiative, Track, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword)
Skills Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Listen +7, Ride +4, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 nature or underground)

ZAN OLDAVIN **CR 3**
Male half-elf rogue 3
N Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Elven, Orc

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10
hp 19 (–4 currently, 3 HD)
Immune sleep
Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +4 (1d3)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Atk Options Combat Expertise, sneak attack +2d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Expertise, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +10, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +3, Hide +8, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Search +8, Tumble +8, Use Magic Device +7

Tactics: If the alarm is raised, Bua Gorg moves to a position near Drevoraz and prepares an action to start casting *summon monster III* as soon as he sees intruders. Drevoraz stands near Lavinia, his scimitar at the ready to strike the woman at a moment's notice. When the PCs enter the room, Drevoraz demands the PCs lay down their arms or he'll hack off their pretty employer's head. Showing him a note from Harliss won't make a difference, but if they also show him one of her marilith earrings, Drevoraz wavers in his position. With this, or with a DC 40 Diplomacy check, his demands change. He asks the PCs for safe passage out of the city, at which point Bua Gorg croaks in rage, shrieking "We were promised blood for the lord of the depths! Dagon will not be denied!" The bullywug immediately attacks the closest PC, and Drevoraz takes advantage of the chaos to attempt an escape, fighting only as much as he needs to in order to clear a path to freedom.

If, on the other hand, the PCs fail to bargain with the half-orc (or if they simply attack) he tries to strike Lavinia down. Unknown to him, Lavinia has already managed to work free from her bonds and as soon as he starts to approach, she lunges free. Call for initiative checks. If Drevoraz goes before Lavinia, he moves up to her and makes a single attack against her. If Lavinia goes before him, she moves to seek safety with the PCs, and on his turn Drevoraz attacks the closest PC instead. Bua Gorg has used up most of his spells, and tries to spend as much time possible summoning monsters to aid the fight. If Drevoraz takes lots of damage, the bullywug moves in to use his *wand of cure light wounds* on the half-orc.

If the PCs free and heal either of the Jade Ravens, they quickly join the fight as well, grabbing their weapons from the pile near the bed if possible.

Drevoraz attempts to flee if brought below 15 hit points. If prevented from doing so, he fights to the death, too proud to give up to the enemy. Bua Gorg's motivations stem more from fanaticism than pride—he fights to the death as well.

Treasure: Drevoraz has stacked all of the gear he's taken from Lavinia, Tolin, and Zan in a heap next to the bed. Lavinia's gear consists of a *potion of cure light wounds*, a masterwork rapier, a *ring of protection +1*, a pair of gold earrings worth 200 gp for the pair, and a jade ring worth 80 gp. Tolin's gear consists of a *+1 chain shirt*, two masterwork shortswords, a composite longbow (+2 Strength), 40 arrows, a *cloak of resistance +1*, and 56 gp. Zan's gear consists of a suit of *+1 studded leather armor*, a masterwork buckler, a masterwork rapier, a masterwork shortbow with 40 arrows, *goggles of minute seeing*, and 14 gp.

Development: If the PCs have already rescued the other two Jade Ravens and have defeated the remaining bullywugs in the manor, proceed with "Concluding the Adventure," below. Otherwise, Lavinia, Tolin, and Zan beg them to help rescue Liamae and Kaskus; none of them know where the other two have been taken, but the basement is the first place they suggest checking.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

At the end of this adventure, the PCs are no closer to finding Vanthus, yet they have made an important discovery—although they may not yet realize it. The *shadow pearls* constitute the greatest threat Sasserine has ever faced, and the PCs' destiny is now inexorably tied to these dangerous black gems.

For now, however, the PCs have earned a break. Further impressed with their ability to act under pressure, Lavinia rewards the PCs not only with monetary wealth (using the monies she's gained from the various guilds and nobles who have finally paid back the debts owed her family, she can grant each PC a reward of 100 pp) but increases their monthly stipend from 100 gp to 200 gp. If you use the upkeep variant rules from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 130), you can instead assume that she keeps the PCs in an extravagant lifestyle as long as they remain in her employ.

Let the PCs enjoy their "time off." They can use this time to craft magic items, shop for new gear, explore Sasserine, or even go on adventures beyond the city walls in the surrounding regions. Several possible adventure hooks are presented in issue #349 of DRAGON magazine, which details the Sasserine region in that issue's "Savage Tidings." The PCs may even wish to follow up on parts of this adventure, although for now, their questions about Vanthus and the *shadow pearls* are destined to reveal only dead ends. Vanthus never returns to Sasserine, and as the days go on, Lavinia's need to see her brother face his crimes goes from a burning obsession to a quiet brooding anger.

BY NICOLAS LOGUE

Affiliation Awards

If your PCs belong to any of the affiliations detailed in DRAGON magazine #348's "Savage Tidings," goals exist in "The Bullywug Gambit" that can increase their affiliation score. Each of the following criterions grants an affiliation score modifier of +1.

Church of the Whirling Fury: Kill all of the savage creatures in Kraken's Cove and provide a detailed report to Lady Silverhair.

The Dawn Council: Capture Drevoraz alive and turn him over to the city watch for interrogation regarding the Crimson Fleet.

The Scarlet Brotherhood: Deliver a live savage creature to a Brotherhood Representative for experimentation and investigation in the motherland.

The Seekers: Turn the nautical charts found in area **K8** over to the Seeker Lodge.

The Witchwardens: Recover the fragments of the *shadow pearl* from area **K1** and turn them over to the Witchwardens for study.

Zelkarune's Horns: Capture the rust monster Chunkus alive and turn him over to the Arena to become a featured monster.

In Kraken's Cove, the remaining savage creatures quickly die off as their violent natures send them into constant battles with the dangerous creatures of the region. By the end of the month, they are gone, and all that remains of their passing is an empty seacave littered with well-gnawed bones. Consultation with sages and libraries in Sasserine provides little insight at this time into the nature of what occurred at Kraken's Cove, and stories the PCs spread quickly become part of the region's rumor-haunted tradition.

By the time the itch for adventure strikes the PCs again, Lavinia is ready for them. She's finished reading through the strange notebooks recovered from the family vaults in the first adventure, and reports that they were, in fact, penned by her own mother during a trip to a place called the Isle of Dread. Further, it would seem that one of her parents' last accomplishments before their untimely deaths was to establish a colony on a relatively safe islet near the Isle of Dread. According to the notes, her parents planned on returning to this colony, called Farshore, with supplies and additional colonists, but their deaths put an end to that plan. With the PCs' aid, Lavinia hopes to travel to Farshore, resupply the colonists, and nurture the settlement into a living monument for her parents. The trip, she warns them, will be anything but short and safe, but the prospects for adventure and wealth should outweigh any fears the PCs may have. All she needs is another ship to aid in the voyage. Perhaps one of the pirate vessels that survived the fire in Kraken's Cove might fit the bill?

APPENDIX 1: THE SHADOW PEARL

The original *shadow pearl* was created over a thousand years ago by the Prince of Demons and then sent to the Material Plane for his followers to discover and use. The results of the first savage tide released by a *shadow pearl* devastated an entire nation and created the realm known to sailors today as the Isle of Dread.

Despite being minor artifacts themselves, the *shadow pearls* being produced by the hidden rulers of the Isle today are poor approximations of the first pearl. Yet these lesser *shadow pearls* are more than enough to serve Demogorgon's needs, and as more are created and seeded throughout the world, the awful culmination of the demon lord's plans draws near.

A *shadow pearl* is a lustrous black pearl approximately four inches in diameter. Anyone who studies the pearl's glossy surface for more than a minute sees what appears to be a swirling vortex of shadows within. As the viewer watches, faces form in the shadows until a twisted, feral reflection of the viewer rises to the pearl's surface, leering and hateful. While unnerving, this has no effect on the viewer.

A *shadow pearl* serves one function—to create a savage tide. This is a wave of rippling green energy that washes over the surrounding region, transforming creatures within to savage creatures (see Appendix 2). To trigger a pearl, it must be anointed with the blood of an intelligent creature—just a single drop will do. For one minute thereafter, the pearl sizzles and flashes with green light, reverting to normal after this time if no further action is taken. If the pearl is dropped or struck a solid blow during this minute, it cracks open and unleashes a choking cloud of green gas in a 20-foot-radius spread. Any creature that ends its movement for a round inside this cloud takes 1d6 points of acid damage. The smoke itself teems with swirling evil spirits and gnashing fangs. Once a *shadow pearl* is cracked, it smokes and sputters for one minute before exploding into a savage tide. Only by negating the *pearl's* growing magic with a successful *dispel magic* or *Mordenkainen's Disjunction* can the oncoming savage tide be halted. Placing the *pearl* in an antimagic zone until this minute passes also prevents the savage tide.

Once the *pearl* explodes, a savage tide flashes like a wave of boiling green water and fog out to a one-mile radius spread. All corporeal aberrations, animals, dragons, fey, giants, humanoids, magical beasts, and monstrous humanoids in this area must make a DC 15 Will save. Success indicates the creature is merely

nauseated for one round. Failure means that the savage tide has washed away their sanity and immediately transforms the victim into a savage creature (see Appendix 2).

A *shadow pearl* is a one-use item. Once it unleashes a savage tide, it is consumed.

Strong transmutation [chaotic, evil]; CL 20th; Weight 1 lb.

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTER

Savage Creature

It may have once been a man, but now its gray skin, strangely flopping arms and legs, and the vacant-eyed vestigial head hanging from its neck make the creature anything but. Yet perhaps worst of all is the creature's mouth, a cavernous wound in its twisted face filled with a twisting landscape of teeth, a mouth designed for one thing only—the tearing of flesh from the bone.

Savage creatures are a horrific transformation of living flesh into Abyssal nightmare. Created when the hateful energies of a savage tide corrupt and transform its victims, savage creatures are akin in many ways to fiendish creatures, yet they are tied more closely to the evil and chaos of the Abyss than any other plane.

Sample Savage Creature

This example uses a human rogue 1 as the base creature.

Savage Pirate **CR 2**
Male and female savage human rogue 1
CE Medium humanoid (chaotic)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +5, Spot +9
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 10 (1 HD), ferocity; **DR** 5/magic
Immune disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, pain
Resist acid 10
Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1
Weakness afflicted

Spd 40 ft.
Melee scimitar +3 (1d6+3/18–20) and bite –2 (1d8+1 plus disease [DC 14])
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +4
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 17, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ death throes
Feats Athletic, Improved Initiative
Skills Balance +6, Bluff +3, Climb +9, Diplomacy –5, Disguise –5, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information –5, Intimidate +7, Jump +7, Listen +5, Profession (sailor) +5, Spot +9, Swim +9, Tumble +6
Possessions masterwork studded leather armor, scimitar

Creating a Savage Creature

"Savage Creature" is an acquired template that can be added to any intelligent corporeal aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, or monstrous humanoid.

Size and Type: The base creature's size and type remains unchanged, though it gains the chaotic subtype.

Armor Class: A savage creature's natural armor bonus increases by 2.

Speed: Increase the base creature's land speed by 10 feet.

Attacks: A savage creature gains a bite attack. If the base creature can use weapons, it retains this ability. When armed with weapons, the creature's bite attack becomes a secondary attack.

Damage: A Medium savage creature's bite attack inflicts 1d8 points of damage on a hit. Larger or smaller savage creatures do more or less damage, as outlined on Table 2–2 on page 28 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. A savage creature's bite attack is treated as a chaotic and magic weapon for the purposes of penetrating damage reduction.

Special Attacks: A savage creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains the following special attacks.

- *Death Throes (Su)*: When a savage creature dies, it can immediately make a bite attack, snapping at any one creature in reach just before it succumbs. A savage creature can make this free bite attack only after an attack kills it outright. Once this bite attack is resolved, the savage creature's body melts into a puddle of acidic goo, leaving behind only its gear and its skeleton. Any living creature within a five foot radius of a melting savage creature takes 1d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 15 negates)—this acid damage affects only living flesh. A pool of acid remains on the ground, taking up a space equal to the creature's space while living—it deals 1d6 damage to any creature that moves through the area. The acid dries to a harmless green powder over the course of one minute.

Scaling the Adventure

"The Bullywug Gambit" is designed for a group of four 3rd-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 1st-2nd level or 4th–5th level characters. Simply adjust any NPC character levels up by 1 for every level by which your party's average exceeds 1; if this results in a 0-level NPC, simply give that NPC a level of warrior or expert. Specific changes to the adventure include:

1st–2nd-level characters: Encounters with savage creatures should be reduced significantly, at least until the PCs have a reliable magic weapon. Consider removing the DR 5/magic quality from savage creatures of CR 3 or lower. Replace Ripclaw with a savage crocodile or savage Medium viper, and replace Jajirlok with a savage lizardfolk. Replace the violet fungus in area **K6** with a Large monstrous spider. Consider having rescued members of the Jade Ravens be less wounded so they can provide more aid to the PCs.

4th–5th-level characters: Add an additional savage pirate to every encounter that features them. Advance Ripclaw by 2–4 Hit Dice, and give Jajirlok one or two levels of barbarian. Add a second violet fungus to area **K6**, and 2–3 more savage krenshars to area **K9**. Keep the bullywug hunters as 1st-level rangers, but add 2–4 to each encounter with them. Add a like number to area **V27**.

- *Disease (Su)*: A creature bitten by a savage creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 savage creature's racial HD + savage creature's Con modifier) or contract a supernatural disease called savage fever. The incubation time of savage fever is 1 minute, after which point the victim's flesh breaks out into a terrible black rash that causes short bony protrusions to extrude from the affected area; the victim also takes 1d6 points of Intelligence damage. Every day thereafter, the victim must save again or take another 1d6 points of Intelligence damage as the terrible rash spreads and his mind grows more and more bestial. Once a victim reaches an Intelligence score of 0, he collapses into a coma-like state and transforms into a savage creature. His Intelligence score now heals (up to its new maximum, adjusted by the savage creature template) at the normal rate; when he awakens, he immediately seeks out fresh prey.

Special Qualities: A savage creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

- *Afflicted (Ex)*: Once transformed into a savage creature, a *greater restoration* spell causes the victim to revert to normal, provided the caster succeeds on a caster level check (DC = 10 + 1/2 the savage creature's hit dice + the savage creature's Charisma modifier). A *miracle* or *wish* spell automatically restores a savage creature to normal. A savage creature that is killed and then brought back to life loses the effects of this template.
- Damage Reduction: 5/magic
- Darkvision 60 feet.
- Immune to disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting, stunning, and pain-related effects.
- Resistance to acid 10.
- *Ferocity (Ex)*: A savage creature fights without penalty while disabled and dying.

Abilities: Change from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Con +4, Int –6 (minimum 1). A savage creature whose Intelligence is reduced below 3 can no longer understand any languages, nor can it cast spells or use spell-like abilities of any kind.

Skills: Savage creatures are hideously deformed. Many possess vestigial tentacles, sickening patches of bristles or tangled hair, rudimentary eyes, twisted arms and legs, and sometimes a second vestigial head. No two savage creatures have the same deformities, but each gains a +4 racial bonus on Escape Artist, Intimidate, Listen, and Spot checks, and a –4 penalty on Disguise, Diplomacy and Gather Information checks.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil.

Challenge Rating: As base creature +1

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +3.

Nicolas Logue was a monk 5/thespian 6/freelance writer 7 upon the completion of this adventure, but assassins in the employ of Richard Pett and Greg Vaughan slew him shortly thereafter. Nicolas remains one step ahead of Pett and Vaughan, fortunately, and thanks to a clone *spell, is among the living once more (though he's down one level of freelance writer as a result and none too happy about it). Nicolas would like to dedicate this adventure to the Frumjoys, his oldest brother Dr. Christopher Logue, and Jimmy Buffett, who all taught Nick everything he knows about the pirate's life.*

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

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THE FALL OF GRAYMALKIN ACADEMY

BY MARK A. HART
BY STEVE ELLIS, TOMAS GIORELLO
BY ROB LAZZARETTI
ANY SETTING, MID LEVEL (6TH–12TH), DUNGEON CRAWL

For two centuries, Graymalkin Academy served as a beacon for magical learning, a place where gifted students both rich and poor could learn the mysteries of the arcane. Two months ago, catastrophe struck the school as invaders attacked and massacred students and teachers alike. Now, four factions struggle to control the school, each seeking to unlock Graymalkin's secrets and plunder the school's vaults for a powerful magic relic.

"The Fall of Graymalkin Academy" is a D&D adventure for four 9th-level characters. The adventure takes place entirely within and beneath the academy, making it easy to place this adventure anywhere in any campaign.

Adventure Background

The Graymalkin Academy of Magic has always been a political and economic force in the region, enjoying an impressive reputation thanks to its faculty and curriculum. Apprentices flocked to the school to learn magic, and a steady stream of supplicants and merchants looking for discount magic items kept the school's coffers full. Unfortunately, Graymalkin's success also earned it the enmity and envy of rival wizards.

Tragedy engulfed the school two months ago, when an exiled drow named Aldevein invaded the caverns beneath the school in search of the *Tapestry of Midnight*, a magical relic locked within the school's vaults.

Too long complacent, the academy's teachers proved poor defenders. Aldevein's initial *cloudkill* assault killed most of the students and staff, and the surviving faculty soon admitted defeat and activated the school's failsafe defenses, designed to contain the invaders and keep out looters. A field of ice encased the building and turned Graymalkin into a frozen tomb.

Aldevein's victory proved pyrrhic. She retained control over portions of the school, but possessed insufficient force to acquire the *Tapestry*. The relic offers Aldevein her best chance at ending her exile from drow society and salvaging her reputation, and although she possesses the vault key, she lacks the password to bypass the vault's magical defenses.

Graymalkin's misfortune didn't end there. With startling prescience, an aboleth named Shivusk moved into the caverns just hours after the Academy's fall. There it laid its first clutch of eggs and intends to lay more—though it will be ten years until its brood is old enough to help hold the academy, Shivusk hopes to use the *Tapestry* to cement its position.

Three days after Aldevein's attack, a rakshasa named Vaxis entered the school in search of the *Tapestry* as well. Surprised by the competition, his initial attack against the aboleth failed at heavy cost. Though Vaxis gained control over several areas of the academy, he lacks the vault key and the command words to bypass the vault's defenses.

Finally, a pair of wizards, Tomas and Moira, survived the school's downfall and fight to keep Aldevein, Vaxis, and the aboleth out of the vaults. Although they lack the power to defeat the invaders, they use their spells and resources to keep their enemies off balance while they wait for help.

Adventure Synopsis

Whether the characters enter the academy to plunder its magic or to investigate its fate, they stumble into a war zone.

Each faction possesses its own secrets. No one knows why the aboleth moved here, and Vaxis maintains a disguise as a human wizard to keep his heritage secret from the other groups and his servants.

The obvious path involves the elimination of the evil factions, thus freeing the school and keeping the *Tapestry* safe. If the PCs prefer to minimize combat, they may choose to take the vault key from Aldevein. With the key in hand, the PCs may take the *Tapestry*, or they may simply leave the school. Without the vault key, the *Tapestry* remains safely out of the hands of the villains, but PCs who take the key and run find themselves immediately hunted by the rakshasa, and possibly Tomas and Moira as well.

Adventure Hooks

Whether the characters live in the region or are simply passing through, they quickly hear rumors about the trouble at Graymalkin Academy. Though the locals know nothing of the true situation, their stories swell with imagined dangers, curses left by dead wizards, and mounds of gold, jewels, and magic awaiting discovery. Exploring the school, avenging the death of the students, or simply looting a battlefield are all legitimate PC motivations—the school represents tremendous opportunities for discovery, information, and wealth.

Dungeon Features

Graymalkin Academy occupies an impressive two-story building of stone, brick, and marble. Most remarkable, however, is the translucent sheath of thick ice encasing the school.

Except for one entry point on the roof, this variant *wall of ice* encases the school in an enormous cube. Any creature breaking or passing through the wall suffers 1d6+15 points of cold damage. The *wall of ice* repairs damage at a rate of 30 points per hour.

Ice Wall: 15 in. thick; Hardness 0; hp 45; Break DC 30.

The simplest entry into the school is through the top floor. Once the party reaches the rooftop, they notice that a patch of ice has retreated from a doorway, which opens onto a spiral staircase leading down to the upper floor.

Unless otherwise described, pale daylight flickering through the ice wall and windows provides the only illumination. At night, much of the school sits in darkness. Room and hall ceiling heights average 15 feet, although several rooms feature higher ceilings as described. Interior doors are constructed of wood and unlocked unless otherwise stated.

Over the past two months, the warring factions settled into a routine of patrols, setting ambushes, and fighting over dwindling resources. The area each faction controls has remained static since Vaxis arrived—the list below outlines each faction's holdings.

Tomas and Moira control areas **12**, **13**, **14**, **15**, **16**, and the hallway between these rooms. Aldevein controls areas **19**, **20**, **21**, **22**, **23**, and the hallway between these rooms. Vaxis controls areas **6**, **7**, **27**, **28**, **29**, **30**, and the hallways and staircases near these rooms. The aboleth controls areas **31**, **32**, **33**, **34**, **35**, and the tunnels and hallways connecting these areas.

Upper Floor

1. Stairs to the Roof (EL 7)

A spiral staircase connects the top floor to the rooftop, its metal steps coated with a thick layer of frost. A pair of ice-encrusted corpses, clothed in gray robes, lie huddled in a corner.

These two students perished here the night of the invasion, overcome by a *cloudkill* spell. A successful Heal check (DC 19) determines that these two died from poison. The cold from the outer ice wall has preserved their bodies.

A DC 20 Search check locates the room's secret door.

Creature: Aldevein stationed an invisible stalker here to attack anyone except her attempting to enter or leave the building. Thanks to her keen senses, she was able to discover the secret door and suspects it leads into Tomas and Moira's room.

Invisible Stalker: hp 52; *Monster Manual* 160.

Treasure: One dead student holds a leather book tucked under his arm. The textbook, "Ethain's Guide to Conjurations," is worth 70 gp.

2. Shaft of Flying

A damp, cool breeze wafts up through the square shaft. The opening, bathed in darkness, extends down to the ground floor and beyond. A bronze wall plaque to the left of the shaft cautions, "Miscreants abusing elevator will be POLYMORPHED!"

A square shaft extends from the top floor of the school to the underground caverns. Any creature standing in the shaft gains the benefits of a *fly* spell. From top to bottom, the shaft extends 80 feet. The *fly* effect lasts as long as a person remains in the shaft. An unattended object dropped or thrown into the shaft falls normally.

Every morning, Tomas wards the top 20 feet of the shaft with an *alarm* spell. If any creature of Tiny or larger

size enters the shaft, Tomas receives a silent mental alarm.

3. Balcony (EL 1)

A marble balcony overlooks the lower level entryway and foyer. A magnificent stained glass window depicting a trio of blue-robed wizards dominates the foyer's east wall above the front doors. One wizard wields a staff, another holds a crystal ball, and the third balances a ball of flame over his open palm. Two 8-foot-tall statues guard the balcony. The northern statue is of a bearded man in wizard robes clutching a staff with a stylized serpent's head. The other statue is of a woman with a marble pseudodragon perched on her left shoulder, its tail coiled around her arm.

Creature: Bertham, Moira's homunculus (area **14**), sits on the shoulders of the male wizard statue and observes the balcony and foyer. When intruders enter the area, Bertham hides and remains motionless, allowing his mistress to see and hear everything that occurs. If attacked, Bertham flees toward Moira. If the homunculus dies, Moira suffers 2d10 points of damage.

Homunculus: hp 11; *Monster Manual* 154.

4. Library

Wooden shelves stand throughout the room and line the walls, each stacked high with books and scrolls. The distinct scent of dry paper mingled with dust fills the air.

The library holds an impressive collection of texts and includes over 5,000 different books, tomes, scrolls, and tablets, all arranged by subject.

Treasure: The vast majority of books here possess a value of anywhere from 10 to 60 gp, though certain choice tomes may fetch prices in the hundreds.

5. Storage

At one time, the school stored furniture, tools, and supplies here. Scuffmarks and bloodstains imply that this room was not always uncontested.

6. Anatomy Laboratory (EL 10)

The stale smell of acrid herbs lingers here, and the room feels colder than elsewhere in the school. Four long tables, draped with white sheets, occupy the chamber's center. Faded bloodstains mar the walls, floor, and ceiling. A rack of sharp knives lies collapsed near the entrance, leaving a dozen bladed tools scattered across the floor. The pulverized slivers of a door swing on twisted hinges.

In brighter days, the students studied anatomy and physiology here. During the invasion, a handful of students and staff locked themselves in here. Unfortunately, Aldevein's gray render smashed the door and tore them to shreds.

Creatures: Four xills stand watch here. If attacked, or if they detect intruders, one xill planewalks and moves downstairs to report.

Noise near this room attracts the attention of the barghests living next door (area **7**). The xills fear the barghests,

and may choose to fall back and let the fiendish monsters handle any combat.

Xills (4): hp 32; *Monster Manual* 259.

Development: If the xills hear combat or similar disturbances downstairs, two of them investigate. Experience has taught them to avoid the shield guardian in area 12.

7. Elements Laboratory (EL 7)

Desks, chairs, and shelves lie in shattered pieces throughout the room. At the center, someone or something has piled a chaotic jumble of bones and clothing into a crude nest. The strong, musky odor of wet dog clouds the room.

Students learned to manipulate and control elemental magic here. Maps and charts depicting the cosmology of the elemental planes decorate the walls, while other wall posters diagram the basic elements.

Creatures: A pair of greater barghests nests here. Though they arrived with Vaxis two months ago as mere barghests, they have since devoured enough souls to become greater barghests. The recent lull in feeding makes them restless, and only their fear of the rakshasa keeps them from feeding on the xills next door.

If the barghests hear combat, they investigate immediately in hopes of a meal.

Greater Barghests (2): hp 67; *Monster Manual* 22.

Treasure: The barghests have collected a sizeable hoard during their stay at Graymalkin. Treasure scattered about the room amidst the debris includes 1,200 gp, 3 pearls worth 10 gp each, and 2 pieces of amber worth 100 gp each.

8. Scrying Chamber (EL 6)

Several torches illuminate this room with a warm glow. A small, tranquil pond fills a bowl-shaped depression at the room's center. Four cushioned chairs sit around the pool's edge.

The door to the room has an *arcane lock* spell cast upon it. The current inhabitants of the school remain uncertain about what lies within this chamber, but have been too distracted by the fighting to investigate.

The room once served as classroom and laboratory for divination magic, with the pool a magical sensor for scrying. Whoever sits in one of the four chairs may use the pool to see and hear creatures at a distance as per the *scrying* spell.

9. Summoning Chamber (EL 7)

Scorch marks, gouges in the walls, and cracks along the floor give testament to an impressive battle. A ten-foot-wide circle carved into the floor and highlighted with silver occupies the room's center, with a series of silvery runes surrounding it.

The stone door leading to the room remains locked (Open Lock DC 30).

Advanced students summoned monsters and elementals here, learning the fundamentals of control and protection against summoned creatures. During the invasion, several teachers came here and summoned monsters to aid in the school's defense.

Any *summon monster* spell cast here automatically benefits from the Extend Spell metamagic feat. This room remains forgotten by the various factions.

The engraved circle possesses the powers of a permanent, inward-focused *magic circle against evil*. The circle binds at its center any summoned evil creature. In addition, the engraved runes maintain a permanent *dimensional anchor* within the circle.

Creature: As the school fell to invaders, Tomas used *lesser planar binding* to summon a succubus, Lirrianne, in a desperate ploy to learn the identity of the attackers. Before Tomas could ask his questions or request a favor, a nearby battle forced him to abandon the room. Lirrianne has remained here, trapped within the *magic circle*, for two months. So far, her spell resistance has failed to grant her escape (a 17th level wizard originally engraved the *magic circle*, making her chance of escape small on any given day). She wants two things: to return home to the Abyss, and to tear Tomas's heart from his chest.

Lirrianne, Succubus: hp 33; *Monster Manual* 47.

Tactics: Before characters enter the room, Lirrianne uses *detect good* and *detect thoughts*, followed by *polymorph* to change form. When the characters enter, they see a bedraggled young man crumpled on the floor at the center of the circle. If characters drag him out of the circle, he awakens and thanks them for their generosity. He introduces himself as Allenby, a first-year student who hid here when the school came under attack. Unfortunately, something magical in the room put him into deep slumber.

If a character enters the circle to care for Allenby/Lirrianne, the succubus uses *suggestion* and asks the person to help him from the room, as the long slumber seems to have weakened him.

Though a dedicated interrogation shows Allenby/Lirrianne's story to be full of holes, she needs only to gain her freedom from the *magic circle*. When the opportunity arises, she summons a vrock to kill Tomas. She despises combat and prefers to let others do her killing. As long as the characters offer her a way to reach Tomas, she maintains her disguise and travels with them. If the characters penetrate her disguise or attack her, she flees.

10. Herbarium (EL 9)

The shelves here hold rows of planters, each filled with dead and withered plants. A bright, warm light radiates from the ceiling, providing welcome relief from the icy temperatures elsewhere in the academy.

The herbarium provided herbs and medicinal plants for the school. Although the temperature and light here remain constant, the plants died from dehydration.

The ceiling maintains a constant 70°F temperature in the room. In addition, the ceiling illuminates the room with a permanent *daylight* spell.

Creatures: A raiding party of eight grimlocks hides here to ambush either the human wizards or the nearby xills. They attack any person who passes nearby, but avoid the shield guardian to the north.

Grimlock Barbarians (8) CR 3

Male grimlock barbarian 2
NE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 126
Init +2; **Senses** blindsight 40 ft., scent; Listen +7, Spot +6
Languages Common, Grimlock

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 16; uncanny dodge
hp 40 (4 HD)
Immune visual effects
Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Spd 40 ft.
Melee battleaxe +8 (1d8+6/x3)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8
Special Actions rage 1/day

Abilities Str 19, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4
Feats Alertness, Track, Toughness
Skills Climb +8, Hide +7 (+17 in mountains or underground), Jump +8, Listen +7, Spot +6
Possessions battleaxe

Rage While raging, the grimlock's statistics change as follows:
AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14
hp 48
Fort +8, **Will** +5
Melee battleaxe +10(1d8+9/x3)
Grp +10
Abilities Str 23, Con 20
Skills Climb +10, Jump +10

11. Alchemy Lab

A noxious stench clings to everything here, a mingling of all manner of herbs and concoctions. Shelves, apparently once stocked with glass vials, now stand empty. Thousands of shattered glass containers litter the floor, and green, yellow, and black stains coat sections of the floor and walls. A combination of scorch marks and acid pitting scar the south wall.

The alchemy lab suffered severe damage during the attack and subsequent looting. Initially, the alchemist and his assistants attempted to move what potions they could and destroy the others to keep them out of the wrong hands. Before they completed their work, Aldevein and her minions arrived. In the brief battle, an exchange of *lightning bolts* and a *fireball* ruined dozens of potions, reagents, and elixirs. The resulting magical and alchemical reactions transformed both men into gibbering mouthers.

After a time, the gibbering mouthers used their ground manipulation abilities, softened an area of the stone floor, and created a hole to the trophy room (area **18**). They then went through the hole and have remained on the first floor ever since.

Treasure: A DC 20 Search check turns up a handful of intact potions amidst the debris, including three vials of alchemist's fire in a cushioned pouch, a *potion of cure light wounds*, a *potion of cat's grace*, a *potion of darkvision*, and an *elixir of vision*.

12. Door Guard (EL 8)

A statue of metal, stone, and wood rests in front of the doors leading north. It stands as tall as an ogre, yet resembles a bizarre stick figure with arms and legs of stone.

Creature: A shield guardian guards the entrance to the faculty suites. Originally built as a school project, the construct survived the invasion and now serves Tomas and Moira as a bodyguard, attacking any other creatures that approach within 15 feet of its position. Otherwise, it stands silent and unmoving. Tomas possesses the control amulet—when he activates it, the guardian responds regardless of distance.

If the characters fight the guardian, the noise attracts the attention of Tomas or Moira. As a rule, Tomas investigates while Moira stands ready to assist. When Tomas first encounters the characters, he offers to parley. If the characters agree, he orders the guardian to return to guard duty.

Shield Guardian: hp 112; *Monster Manual* 223.

13. Faculty Suites

These rooms have been gutted by fire—scorch marks scar the walls and floors, and a thick layer of soot covers everything. Crumbled pieces of furniture reduced to charcoal are all that remain.

Before the invasion, the school faculty used these seven rooms as living quarters and offices. (now dead).

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14. Headmaster's Quarters (EL 11)

The brass plate on the door reads, "Kyman Andoverge, Headmaster." Oak furniture, beautiful tapestries, and an impressive book collection lend the room an air of dignified importance. Unlike elsewhere, the room feels warm. Stacks of books and scrolls, as well as crates and boxes, clutter the floor.

Kyman Andoverge, headmaster of the school and the room's former occupant, perished the night of the attack trying to save students from a rampaging gray render.

Four everburning torches light the room. In addition, the room maintains a constant comfortable temperature of 70°F.

Creatures: Tomas and Moira use the headmaster's chambers for their base of operations. The room also provides an emergency escape route (via secret door) to the rooftop (area 1).

Throughout a typical day, Tomas and Moira cooperate for protection and survival. When one sleeps or prepares spells, the other stands watch. Each day, Tomas casts *alarm* on the upper portion of area 2. Afterward, the two spend their time investigating the school, launching raids against other factions, or spying to find out their enemies' plans.

By the time the characters arrive, Tomas and Moira face a hopeless situation. Constant combat has nearly exhausted their stores of scrolls, potions, and components, while their enemies remain entrenched and dangerous. Although Tomas and Moira hope to forge an alliance with the PCs, they only do so if the characters demonstrate good intentions. If the characters speak of looting the school or claiming the *Tapestry* for themselves, the wizards refuse to help.

Of the two, Tomas was the senior faculty member, and enjoys being esoteric and pedantic. Moira, on the other hand, prefers a straightforward, pragmatic approach to life. Whereas Tomas is absent-minded, Moira is calculating and anchored in common sense. Before the invasion, the two wizards disliked one another. After two months of danger, they forged a friendship punctuated by periods of irritated bickering.

Regarding their enemies, Tomas and Moira know they face a female drow sorcerer, a gray render, and numerous grimlocks. They know that an aboleth occupies the cavern level, served by a group of skum and believe that Vaxis is a human sorcerer of some sort, with xill, barghests, and perhaps other creatures at his command. They have had few encounters with Vaxis or the aboleth, but numerous run-ins with Aldevein's forces.

Tomas Calfrei **CR 9**

Male human enchanter 9
NG Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages: Common, Draconic, Sylvan, Undercommon

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12
hp 24 (9 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +3 (1d4–1)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3
Combat gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of cure serious wounds, potion of fly,* scroll of *lightning bolt* (CL 5th), scroll of *dimension door,* scroll of *dismissal*

Spells Prepared (CL 9th, +5 ranged touch)
5th—*cone of cold* (DC 19), *hold monster* (DC 21)
4th—*charm monster* (DC 20), *confusion* (DC 20), *ice storm* (2)
3rd—*clairaudience, dispel magic, hold person* (DC 19), *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *protection from energy*
2nd—*daze monster* (DC 18), *detect thoughts, mirror image, protection from arrows, resist energy, scorching ray*
1st—*alarm, charm person* (DC 17), *mage armor, magic missile, protection from evil, silent image* (DC 15)
0—*daze* (DC 16), *ghost sound* (DC 14), *light, message, resistance*

Prohibited Schools Necromancy, Transmutation

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 13
Feats Brew Potion, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Eschew Materials, Scribe Scroll, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (enchantment)
Skills Concentration +10, Craft (alchemy) +15, Decipher Script +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Profession (herbalist) +6, Spellcraft +18
Possessions combat gear, dagger, *bracers of armor +2, headband of intellect +2,* shield guardian control amulet, door keys
Spellbook as above plus: 0—all except Necromancy and Transmutation; 1st—*color spray, comprehend languages, grease, hypnotism, identify, shield, sleep, Tenser's floating disk, ventriloquism;* 2nd—*arcane lock, glitterdust, invisibility, locate object, minor image, touch of idiocy;* 3rd—*arcane sight, deep slumber, fireball, magic circle against evil, major*

image, stinking cloud, suggestion; 4th—*dimensional anchor, illusory wall, rainbow pattern, remove curse, scrying;* 5th—*feeblemind, persistent image, lesser planar binding*

Moira Ardain **CR 8**

Female elf evoker 8

LG Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +6

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Sylvan

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12

hp 21 (8 HD)

Immune sleep

Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Spd 30 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +3 (1d6–1)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3

Combat gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of cure serious wounds, potion of darkvision, potion of fly,* scroll of *whispering wind,* scroll of *stinking cloud, wand of magic missile* (18 charges, CL 5th)

Spells Prepared (CL 8th, +6 ranged touch)

4th—*dimension door, ice storm, wall of ice*

3rd—*blink, fireball* (DC 17), *heroism, lightning bolt* (DC 17), *summon monster III*

2nd—*gust of wind* (DC 16), *resist energy, scorching ray, summon monster II, web* (DC 16)

1st—*alarm, burning hands* (DC 15), *hold portal, magic missile, obscuring mist, protection from evil*

0—*detect magic, light, mage hand, mending, message*

Prohibited Schools Necromancy, Illusion

Abilities Str 8, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 10

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Heal), Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Balance +4, Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +9, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +4, Spellcraft +13, Search +5, Spot +6

Possessions combat gear, *bracers of armor +1, ring of protection +1,* quarterstaff, light crossbow with 20 bolts, school key (controls the outer *ice wall* encasing the school)

Spellbook as above plus: 0—all except Necromancy and Illusion; 1st—*expeditious retreat, feather fall, identify, mage armor, shocking grasp, Tenser's floating disk;* 2nd—*cat's grace, fox's cunning, Melf's acid arrow, protection from arrows, see invisibility, shatter;* 3rd—*daylight, dispel magic, fly, protection from energy, wind wall;* 4th—*fire shield, locate creature, stoneskin, wall of fire.*

Tactics: In recent weeks, Tomas and Moira learned to fight on the run. In battle, they prefer to launch a few attack spells from long range, such as *magic missile* and *lightning bolt,* and then flee. Because they lack fighters, they avoid melee—when it proves unavoidable, Tomas uses *ghost sound* and *silent image* to distract enemies while Moira casts *summon monster.*

Treasure: Tomas and Moira stockpile supplies and spell components here. If the characters gather the mundane and alchemical equipment, the value equals 500 gp. The wizards also own a *decanter of endless water* and a *Murlynd's spoon* they keep in a locked wooden chest under the bed (Open Lock DC 20, both wizards own a key).

15. Bathhouse

A series of ten marble tubs line the room in neat rows. All sit empty and dry.

The faculty and students once came here to bathe and relax. The baths enjoyed the use of two *decanters of endless water,* both capable of producing warm or cold water. Tomas and Moira now possess one of these decanters, and Aldevein holds the other.

16. Study

The fireplace, rugs, and tables give this study a cozy atmosphere. A few brownish-red stains mar the walls and carpet, and someone has shoved nearly every piece of furniture against the south wall, along with numerous crates and barrels.

Before the invasion, faculty and favored students spent evenings here, playing chess, drinking spirits, and engaging in conversation.

Since the invasion, Tomas and Moira barricaded and barred the south doors with furniture, boards, and nails. Although the shield guardian protects

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the western entrance (area 12), the doors here represent a weakness in the defenses. On several occasions, intruders attempted to break through the study.

The entire study possesses a magical effect that keeps the air fresh and maintains the temperature at 70°F. If someone lights a fire here, the smoke rises to the ceiling and disappears. Noxious gases, such as from *stinking cloud* or *cloudkill*, clear in 1d4 rounds. Another effect in the room enables all occupants to speak and understand one another, regardless of the language spoken or known. Individuals must stand in the room to benefit from the effect.

GROUND FLOOR

17. Grand Foyer (EL 7)

Two sets of marble steps connect the first floor entryway with the upper floor. A mahogany railing lines each staircase. The entryway includes a pair of tall outer doors. Faded bloody footprints stain the polished marble floor.

Vaxis and Aldevein have fought numerous skirmishes over this chamber, but no faction controls it for long.

Trap: Aldevein recently trapped the foyer. Any creature passing between the staircases triggers the trap in a 20-foot-radius area. Aldevein hopes to lure a group of enemies (preferably Vaxis and his xills) into the trapped zone.

***Evard's Black Tentacles* Trap:** CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); no reset; spell effect (*Evard's black tentacles*); 10th level wizard, 1d4+10 tentacles, Grp +18; Atk +10 melee [1d6+4, tentacle]); multiple targets (all creatures in two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

18. Trophy Hall (EL 7)

An amazing display of stuffed animals, carved statues, pottery, and other items adorn the walls of the room. At one time, many more items sat in glass display cases or on pedestals, until someone tore through here in a frenzy of anger or mischief. Many displays lie in ruins across the floor. The high ceiling adds to the room's grandiose appearance, enhanced by the skeletal dragon hanging suspended by chains. Trails of a clear, gel-like substance stain the floor.

The school's trophy room features an impressive collection of relics and antiques. Despite the carnage, numerous exhibits remain intact. Pictures of wizards from the school's history hang on the walls. A handsome tapestry of blue and gold hangs along the west wall and depicts a battle between wizards and a red dragon. Other items include a mummified demon hand, petrified roc eggs, a behir skull, the splintered remnants of a *staff of power* (all that remains after a retributive strike), the journal of Graymalkin's original founders, and a map of a city in a volcano's caldera. At random intervals, the skeletal dragon overhead emits a low grumble thanks to a permanent *ghost sound* set to emit noise at random intervals.

Creature: A pair of gibbering mouthers entered this room via a hole in the ceiling leading to the alchemy lab upstairs. The factions know to avoid this chamber. For now, the creatures remain content to explore the room, deposit mucous, babble, and devour whatever stumbles across their path. Eventually, they may leave the room and explore the school.

Gibbering Mouthers (2): hp 42 each; *Monster Manual* 126.

Tactics: When characters first enter, they hear the muffled sounds of voices whispering and arguing with one another somewhere in the room. As soon as the gibbering mouthers hear intruders, they fall silent and listen to discern the location of their next meal. If possible,they position themselves behind a display case and attack the first party member who approaches.

Treasure: Several items in the room hold considerable value. The most valuable items include the 20-foot-long, 10-foot-tall tapestry (900 gp), a silver ceremonial dagger with moonstone pommel (100 gp), a music box decorated with gold (350 gp), a magical harp able to play songs on request (Perform +15) (4,000 gp), a talking mummified head that gives nonsensical answers to questions (1,000 gp), and a set of three platinum scorpions (400 gp apiece).

19. Dormitories (EL 9)

Rows of beds fill the room. Some lie at odd angles or on their sides, while others remain untouched. A macabre assortment of bones, skulls, and shredded clothing litters the room. The pungent odor of decayed meat permeates the air.

Creatures: Aldevein's grimlock soldiers camp here. At any time, eight remain here sleeping or eating. The others run patrols throughout the school or guard Aldevein.

Male grimlock barbarian 2 (8): hp 40 each; see page 55.

Treasure: The grimlocks pooled their loot and hid everything beneath a pile of bones and clothing (Search DC 15). Their treasure includes 1,600 gp, 2 amethysts (70 gp each), a golden topaz (500 gp), a black pearl (600 gp), and an emerald (900 gp).

Development: If adventurers use stealth to enter the room, four of the grimlocks remain asleep. If Aldevein calls an alert, the grimlocks awaken, run to the dining room (room 22), and await Aldevein's instructions.

20. Staff Dorms (EL 10)

A variety of barrels, crates, and bags fill this room.

The cooks, servants, and clerks who worked in the academy lived in these rooms.

Aldevein stores her supplies, food, and equipment in these three rooms. After two months, her supplies have dwindled to almost nothing, and many barrels and boxes now sit empty.

Creatures: Aldevein initially invaded the academy accompanied by a band of ogres, but they have since perished. Rather than let the bodies go to waste, she cast *animate dead* and transformed them into zombies.

Ogre Zombies (5): hp 55; *Monster Manual* 267.

Treasure: A time-consuming DC 20 Search check uncovers a few unusual items. Items of interest include six copies of *Ebrom's Guide to the Elements* (each copy is worth 35 gp), a portable alchemist's laboratory, and a wizard's spellbook with the following spells: *detect magic, read magic, light, arcane mark* and *mage hand.*

21. Healer's Hall (EL 11)

The row of beds, apothecary cabinets, and the bitter aroma of medicinal herbs identify the infirmary. Tapestries and bed sheets shroud every window.

Creature: Aldevein, a drow sorcerer, uses the former healer's hall as her quarters. Her invasion of the academy and subsequent actions led to the deaths of over one hundred students, teachers, and staff. She knows Tomas and Moira survived, and needs to capture one alive to acquire the vault command word. Without this word, she fears triggering the magical wards protecting the vaults.

Aldevein knows little about Vaxis, but suspects that he is an outsider. Regardless of Vaxis's identity, she blames him for her failures and refuses to cooperate with him. She also knows about the aboleth on the cavern level, having fought that creature and its minions before, to her misfortune.

People first encountering Aldevein are often struck at her beauty, magnetism, and presence. She stands taller than the average drow, and possesses the regal bearing of a queen despite the banishment that fills her with shame.

ALDEVEIN **CR 11**

Female drow elf sorcerer 10

NE Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +7

Languages: Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Drow Sign Language, Elven, Undercommon

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13

hp 46 (61 with *false life*, 10 HD)

SR 21

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9 (+11 vs. spells)

Weakness light blindness

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6/18-20)

Ranged hand crossbow +7 (1d4/19-20 plus poison)

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Base Atk +5; **Grp** +4

Combat Gear 4 vials alchemist's fire, *oil of invisibility*, *potion of cure light wounds* (3), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of lesser restoration*, scroll of *dimension door*, scroll of *Evard's black tentacles*, scroll of *mirror image*, scroll of *summon monster V*, *wand of eagle's splendor* (21 charges)

Spells Known (CL 10th)

5th (3/day)—*cloudkill* (DC 19)

4th (6/day)—*animate dead*, *Evard's black tentacles* (Grp +18)

3rd (7/day)—*fireball* (DC 17), *hold person* (DC 17), *lightning bolt* (DC 17)

2nd (7/day)—*invisibility*, *false life*, *scorching ray*, *web* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist* (DC 15), *silent image* (DC 15)

0 (6/day)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 18

SQ summon familiar (none currently)

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Scribe Scroll

Skills Bluff +14, Concentration +11, Craft (alchemy) +13, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +4, Search +5, Spellcraft +15, Spot +7

Possessions combat gear, *ring of protection +1*, *bracers of armor +2*, masterwork rapier, hand crossbow with 20 bolts, *cloak of resistance +2*, *brooch of shielding*, vault key, alarm horn

Tactics: If she detects intruders in her territory, Aldevein immediately blows her alarm horn to rouse her minions. Next, she runs to the mess hall (area **22**) for the protection afforded by the gray render.

In combat, Aldevein uses her scroll of *summon monster V* and calls 1d3 Large fiendish monstrous spiders to engage her enemies. She varies between casting attack spells (*fireball* or *lightning bolt*) and retreating toward reinforcements.

Trap: Aldevein keeps a locked iron chest (Open Lock DC 25) under her bed. When first opened, the chest appears empty. A DC 10 Search reveals a false bottom. If a PC removes the false bottom without first turning the key in the lock counterclockwise, he triggers a trap.

Burnt Othur Vapor Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (3 rounds); poison (burnt othur fumes, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con drain/3d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 21.

Treasure: Beneath the false bottom, the chest holds wealth looted from the school, including 2,000 gp, a blue star sapphire worth 1,200 gp, a black pearl worth 500 gp, 10 white pearls worth 100 gp

apiece, and *pipes of pain* wrapped in a black velvet cloth.

22. Mess Hall (EL 8)

The former mess hall stands in ruins. Something with tremendous strength has splintered tables and crushed benches, and bits of bone, pieces of wood, strips of cloth, and discarded food decorate the floor. A strange, earthy smell mingles with the odor of decayed food.

Creature: Aldevein's bodyguard, a gray render, lives here. During her exile from her homeland, she encountered the creature and charmed it. Although the *charm* spell has faded, the render "adopted" Aldevein as its family. During the initial invasion, the render proved a potent weapon against the wizards.

The render attacks any creature entering the mess hall unless Aldevein commands otherwise. Creatures who work for the drow refuse to enter the room unless accompanied by Aldevein. Several times in the past, the render has eaten a stray grimlock who blundered into the mess hall.

Recently, a problem has developed for both Aldevein and her render. The creature has devoured every available scrap of meat, including carrion, in the school. Over the past few days, it has started to eat the same gruel Aldevein and her allies eat, which has made the render both cranky and hungry. Before long, it may start eating grimlocks out of necessity.

Grey Render: hp 125; *Monster Manual* 138.

Development: If intruders attack the area or if Aldevein summons her minions, they gather in the mess hall. Unless she plans a stealth mission, Aldevein never travels without her "pet."

If by chance the characters take Aldevein prisoner, they may force her to order the gray render to hold its attack.

23. Kitchen (EL 10)

An impressive number of pots, pans, and cupboards fill the kitchen.

Treasure: Although the kitchen possesses everything necessary for meal preparation, it also includes a magical larder for emergencies. The larder magically produces up to 100 meals per day of gruel and bread for plentiful (if repetitive) sustenance. Once the larder produces a meal, that meal disappears after 24 hours unless eaten. At present, the larder is Aldevein's only source of food; without it, her forces would soon go hungry. As things stand, the limited availability of meat has led to disgruntled grimlocks and a hungry gray render.

A *decanter of endless water*, stolen from the academy baths, sits next to the magical larder.

24. North Classroom

This former classroom is a chamber of horrors. Dried bloodstains cover the floor and splash across the walls, and a pile of decaying corpses fills one corner. Two blood-soaked tables, a corpse strapped to each, occupy the room's center.

After her initial attack, Aldevein gathered prisoners and held them here, torturing them to death with cruel delight. Sometimes she sought information about the school. At other times, she tortured for amusement. The

stench of decay has kept everyone away from this room.

25. South Classroom (EL 4)

Shelves line three walls of the classroom; every shelf is packed with glass jars, vials, clay pots, and ceramic bowls. A bizarre variety of items fills the various containers, including a human head in a jar of clear liquid. Some containers show a label, while others provide scant clue as to their purpose or contents. An enormous wooden chest sits in one corner, a red line drawn around it on the floor.

This classroom, a favorite among students, once held the nickname "The Menagerie." Throughout Graymalkin's history, teachers, and visitors left behind strange items for display. Most of these items hold little value and provide only amusement or mystery, though some items actually served as teaching aids, such as a sealed glass jar filled with quicksilver.

A polished wooden chest sits in one corner, a thick, sturdy chain connecting it to the nearby wall. A thick red line painted on the floor forms a perimeter around the chest out to a distance of three feet. On the floor near the chest sits a clay amphora half-filled with cheap wine. A DC 10 Search check near the chest detects faded bloodstains.

Creature: Wizards, being eccentric and sometimes lacking common sense, sometimes keep strange pets for amusement or bragging rights. Graymalkin Academy possessed one such mascot, a mimic. For the last few years, the mimic has camouflaged itself as a wooden chest. Students were warned to stay away from it (thus the painted red line). For those times (only once in the school's history so far) when an exceptionally foolish student ignored advice but survived the mimic's attack, a nearby student or teacher used the wine in the amphora to dissolve the mimic's adhesive. The taut iron chain prevents the mimic from moving far.

Mimic: hp 52; *Monster Manual* 186.

Treasure: The mimic holds its valuables inside its hungry maw, including 4,000 cp, 800 sp, 76 gp (tossed in almost daily by students over the past two centuries), and three zircons (80 gp each).

26. Classroom (EL 7)

A wide variety of maps and charts decorate the walls. Some reveal distant or mythical kingdoms, while others detail different planes or constellations. Several wall charts break down the anatomy of humans, elves, and even dragons. An impressive tapestry hangs from the north wall and depicts the paths of stars, moons, and other celestial objects. A life-size marble statue of a wizard stands on one side of the teacher's desk, while an oversized suit of iron armor stands on the other side. The crushed and pummeled remains of three humanoid creatures lie here as well, their pulped bodies smeared across the floor.

At one time, teachers taught classes here on creating constructs such as golems and the shield guardian now upstairs. Since the invasion, the various factions have abandoned this room rather than deal with its strange occupants—when a group of Aldevein's grimlocks entered the room several weeks ago, the furniture, a statue, and even a tapestry attacked them. Two grimlocks escaped, but three less fortunate victims remain, their corpses decaying slowly on the floor.

Creatures: Several constructs occupy the room, responding to commands by teachers and requests by students. When the invaders entered the school, a faculty wizard gave a final command to the constructs: attack all intruders who enter here unless they identify themselves as students or faculty. The various constructs lack the ability to discern lies from truth, and thus believe anyone who claims to be a student or teacher, beating all others mercilessly. The animated objects in the room include the tapestry, the marble statue, a rolling table, and a mock-up of an iron golem.

Animated Tapestry: hp 52; SA blind; *Monster Manual* 13 (Large animated object).

Animated Table: hp 52; Spd 60 ft. (wheeled); *Monster Manual* 13 (Large animated object).

Animated Mock Iron Golem: hp 52; SA trample; *Monster Manual* 13 (Large animated object).

Animated Statue: hp 31; *Monster Manual* 13 (Medium animated object).

27. Auditorium (EL 10)

Row upon row of empty wooden seats fills the auditorium. A raised stage occupies the eastern portion of the hall; although most of the auditorium appears deserted, the stage appears littered with pieces of bone, shreds of cloth, and other debris.

Creatures: The xills serving Vaxis use the auditorium as their barracks, with four here at any given time. The others protect Vaxis, walk patrols, or stand guard upstairs.

Xills (4): hp 32; *Monster Manual* 259.

Treasure: The xills keep their wealth haphazardly shoved into piles across the stage, including 2,000 gp, a brown-green garnet (80 gp), an amethyst (120 gp), a bloodstone (40 gp), smoke quartz gem (60 gp), and a red garnet (110 gp).

28. Outer Office (EL 10)

This office's desks and chairs lie in ruins. Old bones, bits of cloth, and shreds of paper litter everything.

Creatures: Vaxis keeps four xills here as bodyguards and fodder in case of attack.

Xills (4): hp 32; *Monster Manual* 259.

29. Headmaster's Office (EL 10)

Someone has turned a magnificent office into living quarters. Handsome polished oak bookcases line the walls, and an imposing mahogany desk fills one corner of the room.

Vaxis uses these offices as his lair. He prefers letting his minions run patrols, make raids, and gather information. Lately, Vaxis has considered abandoning his quest for the *Tapestry*. He remains primarily due to stubborn pride; he refuses to let a mere drow succeed where he has failed. He despises Aldevein, fears the aboleth, and hopes to end the stalemate and leave soon. If approached, he might consider an alliance with the PCs geared towards eliminating Aldevein and the aboleth. If forced to choose between death or losing the *Tapestry*, he flees and abandons his minions.

A mundane problem now frustrates the rakshasa. He and his minions face an almost exhausted food supply. In the next few days, he expects his two barghests to eat a few xills, and plans to send several of the latter into the Underdark to forage. Such an expedition first requires the xills eliminate some of the skum guarding the lower level. Vaxis dislikes attacking the aboleth's forces, but he has few other options available.

Vaxis, Male Rakshasa: hp 52; *Monster Manual* 211.

Spells Known (CL 7, ranged touch +9)

3rd (5/day)—*clairaudience, dispel magic, fireball* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *summon monster III*

2nd (7/day)—*daze monster* (DC 15), *eagle's splendor, ghoul touch* (DC 15), *invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, resist energy, web* (DC 15)

1st (7/day)—*alarm, charm person* (DC 14), *mage armor, magic missile, protection from good, silent image* (DC 14), *true strike*

0 (6/day)—*detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, message, read magic, resistance*

Possessions: *Major circlet of blasting, potion of cure serious wounds, potion of eagle's splendor, potion of cat's grace,* chest key.

Tactics: When Vaxis hears a commotion in the outer office, he casts spells and prepares for attack. How many spells he casts depends on how much time the xills in the outer office buy him with their lives. On the first round, he casts *eagle's splendor*. In successive rounds, he casts *mage armor, resist energy, protection from good, summon monster III* (hell hound), and *invisibility*. If possible, he lets intruders fight the summoned hell hound while he remains invisible. Should that prove ineffective, he enters combat by casting a ground zero *fireball* (his magic resistance protects him) or using his *circlet of blasting*.

Treasure: Vaxis looted the school extensively, and has accumulated an array of gold and baubles. He keeps his loot in a locked iron chest (Open Lock DC 25) in a corner of the room. The chest contains 2,800 gp, a matched set of silver goblets (1,000 gp each), a bottle of fine elven wine (400 gp), a matched pair of bejeweled masterwork dueling rapiers (2,600 gp for the set), a brilliant emerald (800 gp), 2 aquamarines (400 gp each), and 2 silver pearls (100 gp apiece).

Approximately 200 books line the room's shelves (average value 15 gp apiece), most focused on local history, mythology, the academy's history, basic magic education, and treatises on administration and discipline.

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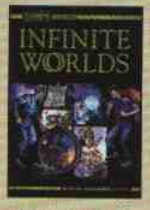

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30. Stairs to Lower Level (EL 8)

These stairs lead to the caverns beneath the school.

Creatures: Vaxis keeps a pair of xill here on guard. They watch the stairs for signs of the aboleth's servants. If they hear creatures coming up the steps, one xill goes for reinforcements from area 27.

Xills (2): hp 32; *Monster Manual* 259.

Vaxis

CAVERN LEVEL

31. Guard Post (EL 8)

The vertical shaft ends in a small cavern. To the south, a passageway leads to a dark hall.

Creatures: A group of skum stands guard here. They attack any intruder in sight, but their orders require them to remain at this post, even if the skum warriors to the south (area 35) come under attack. The skum defend the path to the aboleth's cave unless the aboleth tells them otherwise. If their master calls, four of the skum head to its lair, while the others remain on guard.

Skum (8): hp 11; *Monster Manual* 228.

32. Shivusk's Lair (EL 11)

A series of natural stone steps descend into a cave flooded with dark, still water. The sounds of dripping water echo throughout the cavern, and a sandbar situated on the north side of the cave is littered with skulls and bits of clothing. A tunnel, more than half filled with water, winds its way to the north and east.

From floor to ceiling, the cave has a height of 26 feet. Water fills most of the cave to a depth of 15 feet towards the center, with shallower expanses along the walls and near the sandbar.

The tunnel to the north and east has a total height of 12 feet, with a water depth of 8 feet. The tunnel extends towards a larger flooded cave with several other branching tunnels. An underground stream feeds water into the caves.

Creatures: The aboleth Shivusk lives here, and regardless of whether or not it acquires the *Tapestry of Midnight*, it plans to remain. Throughout the past two months, it has lived here while its minions gathered supplies, guarded the caverns from intruders, and harassed the other factions.

In addition, two chuul share the cave with and serve Shivusk. These creatures sometimes travel upstairs, accompanied by several skum, to raid the other factions. Six skum stand guard here at all times.

Shivusk, **Aboleth:** hp 76; *Monster Manual* 8.

Skum (6): hp 11; *Monster Manual* 228.

Chuuls (2): hp 93; *Monster Manual* 35.

Tactics: In all likelihood, Shivusk knows about invaders ahead of time, as intruders must make it past the skum to the east (area **31**). At the first sign of attack, the aboleth orders the six skum to guard the cave entrance, just out of the water. These creatures fight to the death to protect their master.

Before intruders reach the cave, the two chuuls submerge near the entrance and hide. If characters enter the water, the chuuls attack at the best possible moment for surprise.

Before combat, Shivusk puts its psionic abilities to work. First, it creates an *illusory wall* resembling a cave wall, hiding the sandbar, while it submerges for full cover. If intruders approach closer than 40 feet, the aboleth uses *project image* to create an illusory double of itself, and then drops the *illusory wall* to reveal this fake double. It uses *mirage arcana* to make the cave's water level appear to rise, and *persistent image* to make two illusory chuul rise from the water and attack.

Once characters enter the cave and fight the chuul, the aboleth attempts to enslave a party member. If forced into combat, the aboleth releases its mucous cloud and attacks with its tentacles. If the fight goes poorly, it swims down the flooded tunnel to escape.

Treasure: The aboleth's most valued treasure consists of its clutch of three eggs. These eggs lie underwater near the north end of the cave under a layer of slime. The rest of its horde consists of items its servants have looted from the Academy, including 2,000 gp, a fire opal (1,000 gp), an emerald (500 gp), 2 silver pearls (100 gp each), a piece of amber (80 gp), a piece of jasper (50 gp), a piece of jet (40 gp), a *minor ring of cold resistance*, *oil of levitate*,

and a *potion of blur*. The aboleth leaves this collection piled atop the sandbar under a thin layer of sand.

The chuul's meager treasure, buried in the sand, consists of 115 gp, a mithril pipe (350 gp), a silver necklace with a tourmaline pendant (400 gp), and a *figurine of wondrous power (bronze griffon)*.

33. Underdark Tunnel

This tunnel connects this level to the Underdark. Aldevein, Vaxis, and their respective allies entered the academy through here. If PCs follow the tunnel, they discover it travels steadily downward in a northwest direction.

34. Cave (EL 9)

Haphazard piles of fishbones, broken crates, and piles of shredded clothing decorate the sandbars along the cave walls. A pool of dark water fills the center of the cavern. The pungent smell of fish permeates the air.

The floor of the cave forms a shallow bowl-like depression. Water fills the depression to a depth of five feet. A wide sandbar runs along the cavern's walls.

Creatures: Unless serving the aboleth, running raids upstairs, or standing guard duty, the aboleth's skum warriors use this cave for sleeping and eating. These warriors and their brethren worship the aboleth as their deity, following it to Graymalkin from the Underdark.

Development: If these skum hear the sounds of battle at either guard post (area **31** or **35**) or near the aboleth's cave (area **32**), they investigate in 6 rounds.

Skum (12): hp 11; *Monster Manual* 228.

35. Vault (EL varies)

A massive, imposing iron door serves as this room's only feature. Despite the door's size, it otherwise appears unremarkable. Polished steel plates cover the room's walls and floor.

The Tapestry of Midnight

The *Tapestry*, 10 feet long and 8 feet tall, is fashioned of black silk and weighs approximately 300 pounds. Ripples and shifting shadows flow along the fabric, and the surrounding air feels chill. Once per day, the owner may create and command a shadow (*Monster Manual* 221). The *Tapestry* allows the owner to control up to shadows at a time. If the owner exceeds this number, all newly created shadows fall under his control, while excess shadows from previous uses become uncontrolled. Uncontrolled shadows attack the tapestry owner if possible.

Strong Necromancy (evil); CL 17th; Prerequisites Craft Wondrous Item, *create greater command undead*; Market Price 58,960 gp.

Scaling the Adventure

Encounters in "The Fall of Graymalkin Academy" assume a party of four 9th-level characters. Adjust the levels of all NPCs in the adventure by 1 or 2 in the appropriate direction. Specific changes include:

7th–8th level PCs: Remove one of the gibbering mouthers. Change the ogre zombies into bugbear zombies. Reduce the number of xills in each encounter to two or three. In the aboleth's room, remove both chuuls.

10th–11th level PCs: Add an additional xill to each encounter. Advance the greater barghests by another 6 HD. Advance the gibbering mouthers by 4 HD. Advance the grimlocks to 3rd level barbarians. Change the ogre zombies to gray render zombies. Advance the skum to 4 HD apiece. Give the Shivusk two to four levels of wizard.

A heavy iron door blocks entrance to the vault foyer.

Steel plates, sandwiched with lead, line the walls, floor, and ceiling of the vault. All the vault's walls are ethereal solid and thus prevent entrance or egress through *blinking* or other ethereal travel. The walls, floor, and ceiling possess spell resistance 21.

Iron Door: 4 in.; Hardness 10; 120 hp; Open Lock DC 40; Break DC 38 (includes +10 for *arcane lock*).

Creatures: Six of the aboleth's skum stand guard outside the entrance to the vault foyer with orders to attack trespassers.

Skum (6): hp 11; *Monster Manual* 228.

Trap: Anyone who passes through this door must speak the command word or trigger the trap described below. At present, only Tomas and Moira know the word.

Designed to deter students, the outer door to the vault foyer possesses no traps. The door leading into the vault proper, however, contains a trap. Anyone who opens the vault without the vault key opens a trapped door dropping into a spiked pit.

***Forcecage* and *Summon Monster VII* Trap:** CR 10; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; multiple traps (one *forcecage* trap and one *summon monster VII* trap that summons a hamatula); spell effect (*forcecage*, 13th-level wizard), spell effect (*summon monster VII*, 13th-level wizard, hamatula); Search DC 32; Disable Device 32.

Spiked Pit Trap (80 Ft. Deep): CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 80 ft. deep (8d6, fall), pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 each); Search DC 20; Disable Device 20.

Treasure: The *Tapestry of Midnight* lies folded on a shelf in one corner. In the event that the characters breach the vault, you should place several other items here. The wizards used the vault to store objects that posed a significant threat, either to an owner or to others in general—possible items include a *helm of opposite alignment*, an *amulet of inescapable location*, and a *medallion of thought projection*.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters defeat the invaders and protect the *Tapestry*, Tomas and Moira offer their heartfelt gratitude and promises of future favors. In addition, they offer a reward of 10,000 gp to the party as a small but sincere token of gratitude. They only offer the reward to adventurers who avoided looting the library and trophy room in the school. They plan to repair the school and start teaching new students as soon as possible. As the campaign progresses, the characters may call upon the academy for advice, information, and contacts. Graymalkin Academy eventually reopens its doors. The *Tapestry* remains locked in its vault.

If the characters leave the academy with the *Tapestry*, their troubles multiply quickly. With the exception of the aboleth, surviving factions do whatever necessary to retrieve the relic. Tomas and Moira want to return it to the vaults, while Aldevein and Vaxis want the *Tapestry* for themselves. As long as the characters possess the relic, they find themselves hunted.

Mark lives in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "The Fall of Graymalkin Academy" is his second adventure published in Dungeon. *His first adventure, "Funeral Procession," appeared in issue #135.*

Mt.Zogon
DID I TELL YOU THAT AN ATTRACTIVE HALF-OGRE ASKED ME ON A DATE?
NO! WHAT DID YOU SAY?
I TOLD HIM I ONLY DATE CREATURES THAT CAN DEFEAT ME IN COMBAT.
WHOA.
WHAT DID HE SAY?
HE SAID HIS MOTHER RAISED HIM TO NEVER TO HIT A GIRL.
TONYM © 2006
WOW. GOOD ANSWER.
I TOLD HIM HIS MOTHER KNEW HE'D GET HIS BUTT KICKED.
BY TONY MOSELEY
ZOGONIA.COM

Heart of HELLFIRE Mountain

BY DAVE OLSON
BY ANDREW HOU
BY ROB LAZZARETTI

ANY SETTING | HIGH LEVEL (13TH–20TH) | DUNGEON CRAWL

In the fiery core of an active volcano, agents of the archdevil Mephistopheles are hard at work, mustering followers and laying dark plans. Now, on the eve of the cult's ploy to claim domination over an entire kingdom of fire giants, word has reached a beleaguered king. Will the evil king's plea fall on deaf ears, or will the PCs rise to save the giants from an even darker fate? If the champions hope to stop the rising evil, they must confront the beating heart of Hellfire Mountain.

"Heart of Hellfire Mountain" is designed for a party of four 20th-level characters. Hellfire Mountain can easily be located in any campaign setting that features an isolated mountain range.

Many of the elements in his adventure are drawn from the *Book of Vile Darkness* (mature audiences only) and *Fiendish Codex 2: Tyrants of the Nine Hells*. Although all of the information necessary to run the adventure has been reprinted, these books are invaluable for those seeking more information on these creatures or the machinations of the archdevil Mephistopheles.

Adventure Background

In the darkest layers of the most evil places in the multiverse, devious minds envision new ways to conquer territory and gain power. One such is the archdevil Mephistopheles, Lord of Cania, eighth layer of the Nine Hells. Mephistopheles schemes to take over all of the Nine Hells and rule in place of Asmodeus, the greatest of all the archdevils. But first, the Lord of Cania needs more power, power he hopes to derive from his followers on the Material Plane.

Mephistopheles's influence outside the Nine Hells revolves primarily around his obsession and control over hellfire. Stronger and more potent than any other type of flame, hellfire can burn even the mightiest of red dragons. To cement his position on the Material Plane and to provide a nexus for his followers, the archdevil created the *Heart of Mephistopheles*, imbuing this artifact with a portion of his own malevolent intellect and power. He entrusted this item to Beltorius, a pit fiend who had served the archdevil for centuries. He commanded Beltorius to use the *Heart* to convert or kill as much of the Material Plane as possible.

The pit fiend began his work by carving out an enclave high in a remote mountain range not far from a mighty kingdom of fire giants. As rumors regarding the pit fiend and his command over hellfire spread, a fire giantess named Ingrid Forgebelly, daughter of a fire giant king, sought him out. She wished to claim this new type of fire as her own and use it to depose her father, whom she despised for having courted the friendship of the nearby "lesser" races. Consulting the *Heart of Mephistopheles*, the pit fiend decided that the fire giantess would make an excellent servant, and she was inducted into the worship of the lord of hellfire.

Over the next several years, the cultists transformed their enclave in Hellfire Mountain into a mighty temple-fortress, populating it with a large force of fire giant warriors backed by gifts from Mephistopheles himself: great Canian pit hounds, fiendish wyverns, and mighty horned devils from the Nine Hells. In addition, a mysterious pleasure devil named Lady Madori arrived to keep an eye on the pit fiend.

The next step in Beltorius's plan to gather an army for Mephistopheles: convert or kill the nearby giant clans. With the recent completion of a massive hellfire engine, victory is all but assured unless the PCs interfere.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins as the PCs are approached by the agent of an unusual patron: the fire giant King Snurreson. Snurreson is a powerful fire giant lord, and something of a rarity among fire giants. While undoubtedly evil, he is not the isolationist that most fire giants are, and has actively pursued trading agreements for exotic foods, textiles, and slaves with several nearby kingdoms in exchange for ore. He has recently become concerned with the rising threat of Hellfire Mountain.

In a meeting with King Snurreson in his castle hall, the fire giant tells the PCs he wants the temple in Hellfire Mountain destroyed. He tries to convince the PCs that although his kingdom isn't exactly friendly, it is at least civilized, and there have already been rumors of kidnapped children in surrounding villages; surely they have been taken by the power of this "god of hellfire" (which is true). If he can't convince the characters that he is the lesser of two evils, he resorts to bribery in an attempt to enlist their aid.

The assault on the temple is fairly open-ended and location based, so a party of characters can attack the temple and retreat to rest as needed. Of course, the inhabitants of Hellfire Mountain quickly organize a systematic defense strategy if the party retreats and returns for another visit.

Adventure Hooks

The adventure begins when the PCs receive a visit from King Snurreson's most trusted advisor, Trengor Fireback. The fire giant king wishes to meet with the party, having heard of their great exploits through various sources. He sends a Trengor in a fiery chariot with an invitation to a meeting in his mountain hall.

If your PCs would never accept a mission from an evil fire giant, you could run this adventure without King Snurreson. Any monarch or higher power could summon the characters and charge them with destroying the power in Hellfire Mountain. Perhaps an organization allied with the PCs has been trying to cross the mountains where the volcano sits, and have lost members to unknown circumstances. Divinations reveal the presence of the temple, yet to determine what exactly goes on there requires firsthand investigation.

The Fiery Visitor

The adventure begins with a visit from **Trengor Fireback** (LE male fire giant expert 3, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +25, Intimidate +23), a fire giant ambassador from King Snurreson's hall.

Away in the distance a great light flares, as if from a shooting star. Yet instead of fading away, the fiery light grows brighter as it approaches. Within a few moments, it appears as some sort of fiery chariot, but one not pulled by any sort of animal. Standing in the chariot is a tall figure holding a pair of burning reins in his hands. The figure's skin is charcoal black and his hair red, and he stands at least twelve feet tall. A gold and crimson cloak whips about his shoulders as the chariot of fire approaches.

Trengor Fireback lands his chariot fifty feet from the party's position and steps out, displaying open hands (he carries no visible weapons).

Trengor calls out to the party by name, requesting an audience with them in the name of his lord, King Snurreson of the Hellfurnaces.

Trengor Fireback is an impressive figure, twelve feet tall with soot-black skin. He wears a gold-and-red embroidered cloak and a belt with many pouches attached to it.

Assuming the party does not attack him outright, Trengor produces a large, charcoal-colored scroll from a bag at his side, unfurls it, and announces that their presence is requested at the hall of his liege, King Snurreson, to discuss a mutually beneficial arrangement. The fire giant ambassador does not go into details, saying only that he was sent to bring the characters straight to the king's grand hall in the Hellfurnaces.

A DC 35 Knowledge (nobility and royalty) or Knowledge (history) check recognizes the name Snurreson as that of a renowned fire giant king. Snurreson has united several fire giant tribes under his rule, and is known for being unusually honest and outgoing (for a fire giant).

Trengor is more than willing to subject himself to any sort of magical detection that the party may decide to use. He carries no weapons, is actually who he says he is, and does not intend to harm the characters. His lawful evil alignment may put characters off, so Trengor will do all that he can to appear non-threatening.

Trengor Fireback is neither prepared nor willing to fight the characters, so if they initiate combat, he flees on his flaming chariot.

Treasure: In addition to his *greater ring of spell storing* (containing *teleportation circle*), Trengor Fireback's chariot is actually a slightly modified *flying carpet*

(10 feet by 10 feet), lent to him by King Snurreson to visit the characters.

Development: If the characters agree to meet with King Snurreson, Trengor asks that they prepare to leave via a *teleportation circle* spell back to the mountain hall of his liege. Once again, he bears the party no ill will, and is willing to undergo any magical or mundane investigation to prove his word.

Hall of the Mountain King

After stepping through the *teleportation circle*, the party and Trengor Fireback appear at the grand mountain hall entrance of King Snurreson Forgebelly.

Read the following after the party enters the *teleportation circle*:

> The light of the teleport fades, replaced by the rocky exterior of some unknown mountain. Built into the face of the rock stands a pair of massive, ornate iron doors. They swing open as if on cue, revealing an obsidian-floored hall of magnificent proportions. Pillars of crystal line a path leading to a lavishly appointed throne covered with the hide of a great white dragon. Upon the throne sits a fire giant of epic proportions. A golden crown of flames rests upon his head, and his fiery beard and equally fiery eyes speak of his power. Next to the throne rests a large greatsword, black and etched with runes of power. All along the walls of the immense chamber stand a retinue of fire giants dressed in ceremonial armor.

Trengor Fireback steps forward as the party takes in the scene, announcing their arrival.

Creatures: King Snurreson's hall is guarded at all times by six royal guardsmen (LE male fire giant fighter 8). **King Snurreson** (LE male fire giant aristocrat 2/Fighter 12, Diplomacy +21, Intimidate +30) sits on a throne of gold and obsidian.

Development: King Snurreson wastes no time after introductions have been made. He makes sure to make the following points during the negotiation:

- A temple dedicated to a "god of hellfire" has taken root in a volcano known as Hellfire Mountain. Many fire giants under Snurreson's rule have converted to this new god, turning their backs on Surtur, traditional god of fire giants. The leader of this temple is none other than Snurreson's daughter, Ingrid.
- The worshippers of this "god of hellfire" have made aggressive moves against neighboring territories, including Snurreson's realm and even nearby human lands. If these cultists overthrew Snurreson, they would have a clear path into several human kingdoms. It would seem in everyone's best interests to keep Snurreson on the throne of the fire giants, at least for the time being. If the party is primarily good aligned, the fire giant king emphasizes this.
- Snurreson's forces are spread out across the mountain range; it would take him several weeks to marshal them for an assault on the temple. He has recently learned that the cultists have completed some sort of "doomsday machine," and he does not believe he can spare the time. He needs someone who is ready to act now. He thinks a small but powerful force should be able to penetrate the defenses of Hellfire Mountain and destroy the temple.
- Snurreson offers the party a sum of 60,000 gp to destroy the temple at the heart of Hellfire Mountain. He is willing to pay half up front if the characters request it. Snurreson also offers an additional 15,000 gp if they bring back his daughter, alive or dead.

PCs can make a DC 35 Knowledge (the planes) check to connect the "god of hellfire" with the archdevil Mephistopheles, ruler of the eighth layer of the Nine Hells.

HELLFIRE MOUNTAIN

Hellfire Mountain is a large, active volcano that has been turned into a temple dedicated to the archdevil Mephistopheles. Run by a combination of fire giants and devils from the archdevil's army, the temple also houses a great and potent artifact called the *Heart of Mephistopheles*. It is the *Heart*, not the fire giant priestess Ingrid Forgebelly or the pit fiend Beltorius, that functions as the de facto leader of the temple. To truly defeat the evil that festers in Hellfire Mountain, the *Heart of Mephistopheles* must be destroyed.

King Snurreson

Hellfire Environs

The Temple of Hellfire is at an altitude of 14,000 feet, which means characters are subject to high altitude fatigue (described on page 90 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The fire giants and other denizens of the temple are acclimated to the thin mountain air and are not affected.

The area surrounding Hellfire Mountain is considered a steep slope for the purposes of land movement (page 89 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* has the details on steep slopes and its effect on movement). Vision is limited to 4d10x10 feet, affecting the distance at which an encounter with an aerial patrol occurs.

Aerial Patrol (EL 21)

The land surrounding Hellfire Mountain is continually protected by two aerial patrols.

Divination & Research

High-level characters have many powerful spells available to them, including *divination*, *legend lore*, and its more powerful variant, *vision*. Allow normal success chances for spells such as *divination*, which can provide the party with the following piece of information: "Seek the ruby heart of Hellfire Mountain to end an evil spawned in frozen Cania."

A DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals that Cania is the eighth layer of the Nine Hells, ruled over by the archdevil Mephistopheles.

Legend lore or *vision* cast after a *divination* with the above result yields the following: "Spawned in the Nine Hells, the *Heart of Mephistopheles* beats with a malevolent intellect. Its end can be found by returning the dead." This is a clue on how to destroy the *Heart of Mephistopheles* (casting *resurrection* on the artifact), though the information does not go on to say that it must be smashed afterwards.

Creatures: The aerial patrols consist of two hellfire soldiers mounted on great horned wyverns led by a horned devil. Characters have a 10% chance to run into an aerial patrol per hour. Note that the proximity of the *Heart of Mephistopheles* protects the extraplanar creatures within a 1-mile radius of the temple from spells such as *dismissal*.

HELLFIRE SOLDIER (2) **CR 15**

Male and female fire giant fighter 5
LE Large giant (fire)
Monster Manual 121
Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +15
Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal

AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 25
hp 219 (20 HD)
Immune fire
Fort +19, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 30 ft.
Melee* +1 *greatsword* +25/+20/+15/+10 (3d6+32/19–20) or slam +23 (1d4+18)
Ranged rock +15 (2d6+13 plus 2d6 fire)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +33
Atk Options Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, rock throwing
Combat Gear *potion of resist cold* (2)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 36, Dex 10, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 8
SQ rock catching
Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)
Skills Climb +12, Craft (armorsmithing) +4, Intimidate +5, Jump +12, Ride +8, Spot +15
Possessions combat gear, +1 *half-plate*, +1 *greatsword*, bag of 10 rocks

GREAT HORNED WYVERN (2) **CR 18**

Advanced elite fiendish wyvern
LE Gargantuan dragon (extraplanar)
Monster Manual 107, 259
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +28, Spot +31
Language Draconic

AC 21, touch 6, flat-footed 21
hp 304 (21 HD) **DR** 10/magic
Immune sleep, paralysis
Resist cold 10, fire 10 **SR** 25
Fort +20, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

Spd 20 ft. fly 60 ft. (poor)
Melee* sting +27 (3d6+22 plus poison) and bite +25 melee (6d8+22) and 2 wings +25 (3d6+14) and 2 talons +25 (4d6+22)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +21; **Grp** +49
Atk Options Power Attack, poison (DC 30; 2d6 Con/2d6 Con), smite good 1/day (+20 damage)
*6-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 42, Dex 12, Con 26, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 7
Feats Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (sting), Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Hide +16, Listen +28, Move Silently +25, Spot +31

Horned Devil: hp 172; *Monster Manual* 55.

Tactics: If a fight goes against the patrol, the horned devil attempts to escape by using its *greater teleport* ability to retreat back to the temple (area 15). The guards at each of the temple's main entrances are doubled for the next twenty-four hours. (They are pulled from off-duty worship in the Black Chapel, area 4.)

The Temple of Hellfire

Unless otherwise noted, all the doors leading outside are locked (the horned devils and hellfire cultists have keys that open all the locked doors, except for the door on the Island of Magma). The temple is built of fire-blasted obsidian, leaving a dull black sheen on the walls, floors, and ceilings of the complex.

Rooms and hallways within the temple are 30 feet high, unless otherwise noted.

Reinforced Stone Walls: 2 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 320; Break DC 45.

Locked Iron Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 40.

Read the following when the party approaches the Hellfire Mountain.

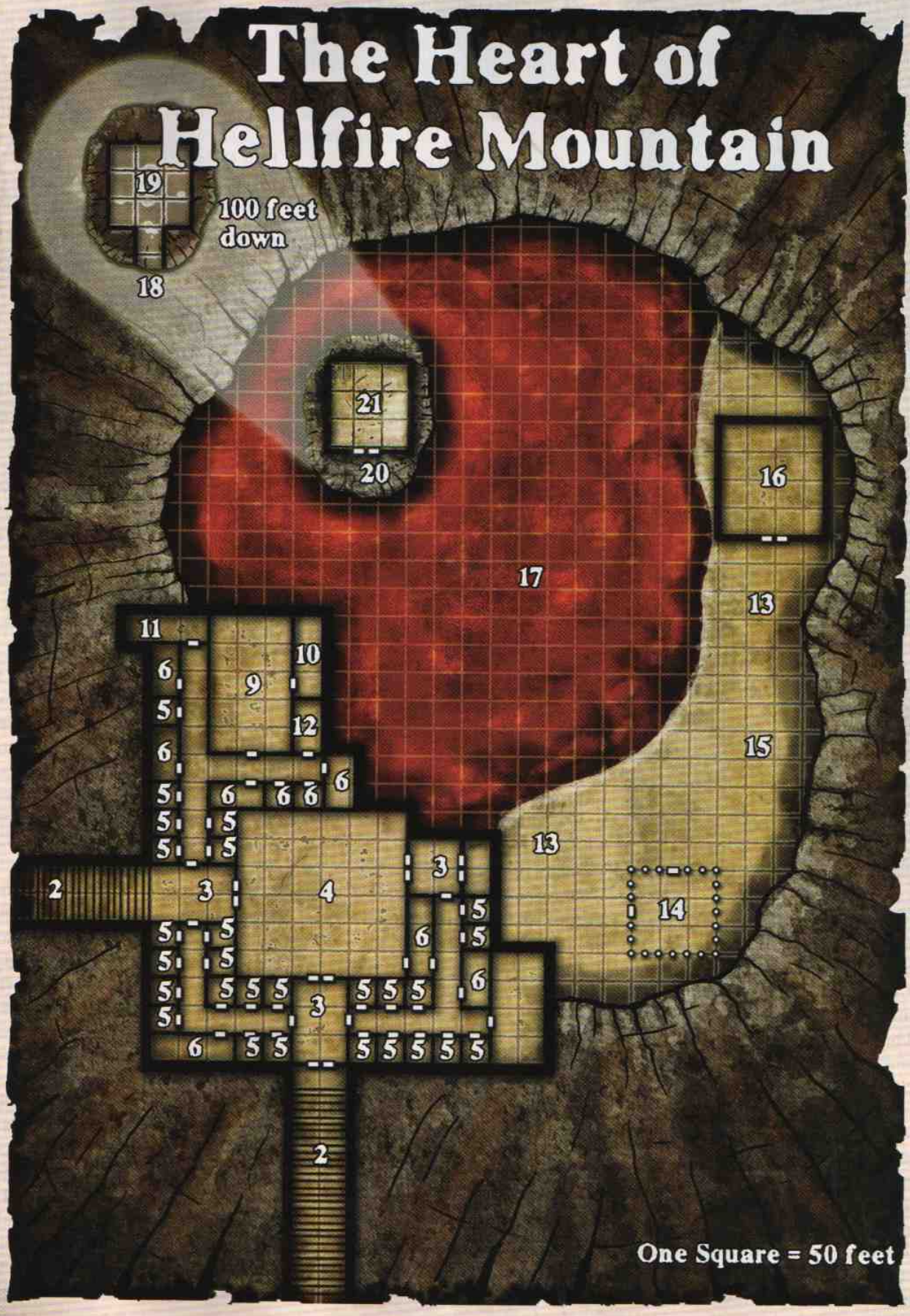
A foreboding stone structure squats on the side of the mountain, with great steps facing south and west. The steps, however, are several thousand feet above the valley floor, with nothing but broken, jagged mountainside between them. The distinct smell of brimstone is on the air, the source of which can only be the plume of smoke rising from the volcano's lip.

1. Mountain Slope

In addition to being a steep slope, the side of Hellfire Mountain is considered dense rubble (page 90, *Dungeon Master's Guide*). While initially daunting, the slope does not force any sort of skill check unless the characters run down it (which takes a DC 25 Balance check to remain standing).

2. Burnt Steps and Iron Gate (EL 17 or 19)

A grand flight of stairs, perhaps once alabaster but now burnt and scorched, lead up a hundred feet from the side of the mountain. They end at a set of massive, iron double-doors, emblazoned with raised letters in some dark and evil language.


The Heart of Hellfire Mountain
19
100 feet down
18
21
20
16
17
13
11
10
9
12
15
6
5
13
3
2
4
14
One Square = 50 feet

What the Fire Giants Know

If one of the fire giants is captured alive (or questioned after death), the party can learn a few interesting pieces of information about the temple and its inhabitants.

The hellfire soldiers know the basic layout of the temple itself, as well as the fact that Ingrid Forgebelly leads worship once every six hours (see The Black Chapel, area **4**). Horned devils lead the aerial patrols and assist a burning dwarf in the forge (an azer in area **8**) and a beautiful seductress with formidable magical powers dwells in the chamber at the end of the northern hall (Lady Madori in area **13**). The soldiers do not know about the *Heart of Mephistopheles*, though they worship the archdevil as the "god of hellfire."

The hellfire cultists know a bit more than their common brethren. They know everything the soldiers know, plus the fact that a pit fiend named Beltorius was sent by Mephistopheles himself to rule the temple. The pit fiend spends most of his time on the Island of Magma and in the *Heart's* chamber (areas **21** and **22**), only rarely showing his face to the fire giants. He is the true master of Hellfire Mountain.

Ingrid Forgebelly is second only to Beltorius himself, and she knows of the Devil Hole in the side of the Island of Magma (area **23**). She also knows that the *Heart of Mephistopheles* is the true lord of Hellfire Mountain, and that even Beltorius obeys its commands.

The writing on the iron doors is in Infernal, and reads, "Behold the fires of Hell, and wither in their light."

Creatures: Each side of the mountain temple is guarded by two hellfire soldiers. Guard duty at the front gates is one of the least interesting posts at Hellfire Mountain, so the fire giants are usually distracted (–2 on all Spot and Listen checks). They work on six-hour shifts, rotating guard duty four times a day.

Hellfire Soldiers (2): hp 219 each; see page 72.

Development: If the party attacks Hellfire Mountain and retreats, guard duty at the front gates is doubled (four guards at each gate), raising the EL to 19. They are also on the alert (no penalties for distraction) and expecting trouble for the next twenty-four hours. After twenty-four hours, the guard shift is dropped back to two, but they are never considered distracted again.

Guard duty is also doubled if a horned devil from one of the aerial patrols escapes melee with the characters.

3. Guardian Foyer (EL 18)

A wide hallway opens into the mountainside, lit by a fiery yellow glow that seems to come from the walls themselves. Two pairs of double doors stand facing each other at each end of the hallway, while smaller doors are set in the center of the other walls.

Creatures: Two Canian pit hounds, bred under the personal care of Mephistopheles' devilish trainers, guard the entrance to the Black Chapel. Bigger, meaner, and tougher than their Nessian warhound counterparts, the pit hounds of Cania attack without mercy against any non-giant and non-devil. They were bred on the coldest plane of the Nine Hells, and true to Mephistopheles' reputation as the archdevil of contradictions, their fiery abilities were augmented by fiendish surgeons who dwell in the archdevil's Canian palace.

Canian Pit Hounds (2) CR 16
Advanced nessian warhound
LE Huge outsider (evil, extraplanar, fire, lawful)
Monster Manual 151
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +28, Spot +28
Language Infernal (does not speak)

AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 25
hp 276 (24 HD)
Immune fire
Fort +21, **Ref** +15, **Will** +15
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 40 ft.
Melee* bite +30 (4d6+23/19–20 plus 2d6 fire)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +24; **Grp** +44
Atk Options Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Snatch, fiery bite
Special Actions breath weapon (10-ft. cone of fire, 4d6, Ref DC 29 half, 2d4 rounds between uses)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 34, Dex 12, Con 24, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 6
Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Snatch, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)
Skills Hide +12, Jump +33, Listen +28, Move Silently +20, Spot +28, Survival +18 (+26 when tracking by scent), Tumble +22
Possessions *+3 chain shirt barding*

4. Black Chapel of Hellfire (EL 25 or EL 21)

If the party comes upon the Black Chapel while Ingrid Forgebelly is giving a sermon (see below), characters can make a DC 10 Listen check to hear her ranting on about the greatness of Mephistopheles, "the god of hellfire."

Beyond the iron doors stretches an enormous chamber, easily three hundred feet long and again as wide. Great tapestries hang on the obsidian walls, depicting vile acts of depravity in some unknown fiery hell. In the center of the chamber stands a twenty-foot-tall statue of a black marble fire elemental. Positioned around the statue are four altars, perhaps gray or white once but now stained a foul and burnt crimson. There are massive iron doors in the west, south, and east walls.

Four times a day Ingrid Forgebelly leads an hour-long ritual with three cultists and ten solders. The rigidly lawful fire giants stand at attention during these brimstone-laden sermons. The chamber is large enough to hold the entire fire giant retinue at the Temple of Hellfire if need be, but generally only ten attend each sermon at any given time.

The statue in the center of the Black Chapel holds a trapped half-fiend fire monolith called the Burning Soul. The monolith is a raging inferno that resembles a massive winged fire elemental, the product of an unholy union between Mephistopheles and a powerful denizen of the Elemental Plane of Fire.

The four altars surrounding the black statue are where sacrifices to Mephistopheles are prepared. Sentient creatures are tortured and mutilated on the slabs of granite, but the actual sacrifice is performed outside in front of the Bell of Cania (area **16**).

Creatures: The party would be ill-advised to assault the Black Chapel while Ingrid Forgebelly is delivering a sermon. If they try, they face ten hellfire soldiers, three hellfire cultists, Ingrid Forgebelly herself, and the Burning Soul. If the party approaches the temple chambers during any other time of the day, they must contend with only four hellfire soldiers (who are on their off-time) and the Burning Soul, which can still be quite a handful in combat.

The Burning Soul is called forth from its prison whenever a non-lawful evil creature enters the Black Chapel. It immediately moves forward and attacks such creatures. Ingrid Forgebelly or one of the other hellfire cultists can also summon it with a full-round action.

Hellfire Cultist (3 or 0) CR 17

Male and female fire giant disciple of Mephistopheles 7
LE Large giant (fire)
Book of Vile Darkness 62, *Monster Manual* 121
Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +22
Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal

AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 26
hp 256 (22 HD)
Immune fire
Fort +21, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 30 ft.
Melee* *+1 ranseur* +25/+20/+15/+10 (2d6+34/19–20) or
slam +23 (1d4+20 plus 1d6 hellfire)
Ranged rock +17 (2d6+13 plus 2d6 fire)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with *+1 ranseur*)
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +35
Atk Options Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, rock throwing
Special Actions hellfire blast, hellfire grasp, *summon hamatula*
Combat Gear *potion of resist energy (cold)* (2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th)
7/day—*flare* (DC 11)
3/day—*hellfire*
2/day—*fire shield*
*7-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 36, Dex 10, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13
SQ rock catching
Feats Cleave, Disciple of Darkness, Evil Brand, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (ranseur)
Skills Climb +12, Craft (armorsmithing) +4, Intimidate +17 (+19 vs. evil creatures), Jump +12, Knowledge (religion) +5, Ride +8, Spot +22

Vile Feats

Disciple of Darkness [Vile]
Once per day, while performing an evil act, the character may call upon his diabolic patron to add a +1 luck bonus to any one die roll.

Evil Brand [Vile]
The character gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against evil creatures.

Possessions combat gear, *+2 half-plate, +1 ranseur*, bag of 10 rocks

Hellfire Blast (Su) A hellfire cultist can release a gout of hellfire from his hand at will, dealing 4d6 points of hellfire damage as a ranged touch attack. This attack has a range of 30 feet.

Hellfire Grasp (Su) A hellfire cultist can make a melee touch attack that deals 1d6 points of hellfire damage. He can also add this damage to the damage dealt by any other unarmed attack.

***Summon Hamatula* (Sp)** A hellfire cultist can summon 1 hamatula once per day as a *summon monster* spell at CL 15.

Ingrid Forgebelly CR 20

Female fire giant disciple of Mephistopheles 10
LE Large giant (fire)
Book of Vile Darkness 62, *Monster Manual* 121
Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +25
Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal

AC 27, touch 9, flat-footed 27
hp 291 (25 HD)
Immune fire
Resist cold 20
Fort +23, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 30 ft.
Melee* *infernal harbinger* +30/+25/+20/+15 (2d6+39/19–20 plus 1d6 fire and 2d6 unholy) or
slam +28 (1d4+21 plus 1d6 hellfire)
Ranged rock +20 (2d6+13 plus 2d6 fire)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with *infernal harbinger*)
Base Atk +21; **Grp** +38
Atk Options Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, rock throwing
Special Actions body of flame, hellfire blast, hellfire grasp, *summon hamatula*
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th)
10/day—*flare* (DC 12)
3/day—*hellfire*
2/day—*fire shield, hellfire storm*
*8-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 36, Dex 10, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ rock catching
Feats Cleave, Disciple of Darkness, Evil Brand, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (ranseur)
Skills Climb +12, Craft (armorsmithing) +4, Intimidate +21 (+23 vs. evil creatures), Jump +12, Knowledge (religion) +8, Ride +11, Spot +25
Possessions combat gear, *+3 half-plate, infernal harbinger (+4 flaming unholy ranseur), major ring of cold resistance*, bag of 10 rocks

Body of Flame (Su) Ingrid Forgebelly can transform her body into flame for up to 10 minutes once per day. While in this form she gains DR 30/magic, and anyone she touches (either with a melee touch attack or her slam attack) must make a DC 15 Reflex save or catch on fire for 1d4 rounds (see page 303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). In addition, any creature that strikes Ingrid with an unarmed strike or natural weapon while she is using this ability takes 2d6 points of fire damage, and must make a DC 15 Reflex save or catch on fire.

Hellfire Blast (Su) Ingrid Forgebelly can release a gout of hellfire from her hand at will, dealing 4d6 points of hellfire damage as a ranged touch attack. This attack has a range of 30 feet.

Hellfire Grasp (Su) Ingrid Forgebelly can make a melee touch attack that deals 1d6 points of hellfire damage. She can also add this damage to the damage dealt by any other unarmed attack.

***Summon Hamatula* (Sp)** Ingrid Forgebelly can summon 1d4 hamatulas once per day as a *summon monster* spell at CL 15.

The Burning Soul CR 20

Half-fiend fire monolith
LE Gargantuan outsider (augmented elemental, extraplanar, fire)
Complete Arcane 158, *Monster Manual* 147
Init +15; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +43, Spot +43
Languages Ignan, Infernal

AC 32, touch 17, flat-footed 21; Dodge, Mobility
hp 414 (36 HD) **DR** 15/—
Immune elemental traits, fire, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10 **SR** 35
Fort +21, **Ref** +31, **Will** +16
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 60 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
Melee* 2 slams +30 (6d6+20/19–20 plus 4d6 fire) and bite +24 (3d6+13 plus 4d6 fire)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.
Base Atk +27; **Grp** +52
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, Spring Attack, burn, smite good 1/day (+20 damage)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20)
3/day—*darkness, poison* (DC 18), *unholy aura* (DC 22)
1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 21), *contagion* (DC 17), *desecrate, destruction* (DC 21), *horrid wilting* (DC 22), *summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow* (DC 19), *unholy blight* (DC 18)
*7-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 36, Dex 33 Con 24, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 19
Feats Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)
Skills Balance +50, Diplomacy +45, Intimidate +43, Jump +64, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +21, Knowledge (religion) +21, Listen +43, Perform (dance) +22, Sense Motive +43, Spot +43, Tumble +50

Burn (Ex) Anyone hit by the burning soul's slam attack must make a DC 35 Reflex save or catch on fire for 1d4 rounds (see page 303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Anyone that hits the burning soul with an unarmed strike or natural weapon takes 4d6 points of fire damage and must make a DC 35 Reflex save to avoid catching on fire for 1d4 rounds.

Hellfire Soldiers (10 or 4): hp 219 each; see page 72.

Tactics: As soon as the party enters the Black Chapel, the Burning Soul springs to life (if it hadn't already) and moves forward to attack. The fire giants in the room are considered surprised for the first combat round.

If Ingrid is in the room, the soldiers show their slavish devotion to Mephistopheles by fighting to the death. However, if Ingrid dies or is not in the room, one of the fire giants tries to escape to the east door and get to the Bell of Cania (area **18**). If the bell rings, the hellfire soldiers in the various common quarters around the

Black Chapel don their armor and prepare for combat with intent to head towards the bell (with a stopover at the chapel). It takes them four minutes to don their +1 *half-plate* hastily, which means their ACs drop from 25 to 24.

Treasure: The tapestries along the walls, while depicting evil and vile acts, are still quite valuable. There are fifteen of them in total, each worth 2,500 gp and weighing 50 pounds. The northern altar contains a hidden compartment (Search DC 30). Within the compartment is a *pearl of power* (9th level) and a pink diamond (8,000 gp value). Only Ingrid Forgebelly knows of this hidden compartment (she has no use for the items but is loath to give them up).

Development: If the party assaults the Temple of Hellfire and retreats, the extra hellfire soldiers are pulled from off-duty to guard duty at various places (two to each of the front gates), which means that the Black Chapel contains only the Burning Soul if there is no sermon being conducted. The sermons continue as scheduled even in the wake of an outside attack.

5. Common Quarters (EL 15, 17, or none)

A giant-sized bed lies against two of the walls of this large chamber, at the foot of which is a large iron chest.

Each of these quarters houses two hellfire soldiers.

The chests are locked (Open Lock DC 20) and contain the personal belongings of each giant (including robes, clothes, combs, and other unimportant items). A stand next to each bed holds the giant's armor and weapon, which is kept brightly polished.

Creatures: There is a 25% chance that a fire giant is laying on the bed in each of these rooms (roll twice for each room). These hellfire soldiers are unarmed and unarmored, and do not take the time to don their armor if someone bursts into their room.

Hellfire Soldiers (1 or 2): hp 219 each; see page 72.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs kill the giants before they can don their armor, reduce their CR by 1.

6. Disciple Quarters (EL 17, 19, or none)

These rooms are more lavish than the common quarters, and serve as the personal chambers of the elite hellfire cultists. Each such room houses two hellfire cultists and their equipment when they are off-duty.

Creatures: There is only a 10% chance of catching one of hellfire cultists in their chamber (roll twice for each room). Like the hellfire soldiers, cultists are unarmed and unarmored (they are usually praying to Mephistopheles for guidance and power), but fight to the death if attacked.

Hellfire Cultist (1 or 2): hp 256 each; see page 75.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs kill the giants before they can don their armor, reduce their CR by 1.

7. Armory

This room appears to be an armory, judging by the rows of giant-sized half-plate armor and racks of giant-sized weapons. Most of the weapons are giant-sized greatswords and ranseurs. Everything seems extremely well-made, marked with graven images of fire and power.

Treasure: There are a total of eighteen suits of Large masterwork half-plate, twelve Large masterwork ranseurs, and ten Large masterwork greatswords.

8. Inferno Forge (EL 19)

A large forge dominates the center of this soot-laden chamber, with a set of bellows and other blacksmithing tools hanging on pegs around the room. In the corner of the room sits a bed built for a creature smaller than a giant. Everything within this chamber is organized and very clean.

Creatures: This is the temple forge, where the azer Copperbelt crafts weapons and armor for the fire giants and devils. He is assisted by two horned devils who also make their home here.

Hellfire

Several creatures in this adventure deal hellfire damage, a new form of damage detailed in *Fiendish Codex 2: Tyrants of the Nine Hells*. Hellfire is the creation of Mephistopheles, archduke of Cania. Hotter than the hottest flames of any world, hellfire burns with a white-hot glow and is capable of burning through even the hardest of substances. Hellfire does not deal fire damage, despite its flames. Even creatures with immunity or resistance to fire take full normal damage from these hellish flames, as do creatures under the effect of spells like *protection from fire*. Hellfire also deals full damage to objects, unlike normal fire damage.

Mephistopheles sent Copperbelt, one of his best blacksmiths, to the Temple of Hellfire to assist with the production of weapons and armor. Copperbelt is an azer from the Elemental Plane of Fire who found strength and power in the teachings of the archdevil. He broke away from his kin and found his way to Cania, where he worked in the service of his lord until finally coming to the Prime Material Plane to assist Beltorius with the new temple.

There is a 50% chance that Copperbelt is here working on some new piece of armor. In this case, the characters can hear the sound of his hammer ringing on metal even before they enter the forge. If he is not at his forge, he is on the bed studying layouts for a new armor design. The two horned devils are at the forge in either case.

COPPERBELT CR 17

Male azer cleric 17 (Mephistopheles)
LE Medium outsider (extraplaner, fire)
Monster Manual 21
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10
Languages Common, Ignan, Infernal

AC 32, touch 14, flat-footed 30
hp 146 (19 HD)
Immune fire
SR 30
Fort +16, **Ref** +10, **Will** +18
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 20 ft.

Melee* *+1 axiomatic warhammer* +21/+16/+11 (1d8+5/x3 plus 1 fire)
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +19
Atk Options heat
Special Actions rebuke undead 1/day (–2, 2d6+15), rebuke fire creatures 1/day (–2, 2d6+15), turn water creatures 1/day (–2, 2d6+15)
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2)
Spells Prepared (CL 17 [CL 18 for evil spells]), +19 melee touch, +16 ranged touch)
9th—*mass heal, summon monster IX*[DE] (evil spell only)
8th—quickened *divine power, incendiary cloud*[D] (DC 24), *unholy aura*[E] (DC 24)
7th—quickened *cure serious wounds, fire storm*[D] (DC 23), *repulsion* (DC 23), *greater scrying* (DC 23)
6th—*fire seeds*[D] (DC 22), *greater dispel magic, harm* (DC 22), *heal, hero's feast, mass bull's strength*
5th—*fire shield*[D], *flame strike* (DC 21), *greater command* (DC 21), *righteous might, slay living* (DC 21), *wall of stone* (DC 21)
4th—*air walk, cure critical wounds* (3), *death ward, freedom of movement, unholy blight*[DE] (DC 20)
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 19), *blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *invisibility purge, magic circle against good*[D], *prayer, protection from energy, stone shape*
2nd—*align weapon, lesser restoration, produce flame*[D], *remove paralysis, resist energy* (2), *shatter* (DC 18), *silence* (DC 18)
1st—*burning hands*[D], *bless, cure light wounds* (2), *sanctuary* (DC 18), *shield of faith* (3)
0—*cure minor wounds* (3), *guidance* (3)
D domain spell, E evil spell; **Domains** evil, fire
Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 22, Cha 6
SQ spontaneous casting (inflict spells)
Feats Alertness, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Weapon Focus (warhammer)
Skills Appraise +6, Climb +7, Concentration +23, Craft (armorsmithing) +9, Craft (blacksmithing) +9, Craft (gemcutting) +4, Craft (weaponsmithing) +9, Craft (locksmithing) +3, Craft (sculpting) +3, Jump +7, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Listen +10, Search +7, Spellcraft +9, Spot +10
Possessions combat gear, *+2 breastplate, +3 heavy steel shield, +1 axiomatic warhammer, belt of giant strength +4, periapt of wisdom +2*, gold-plated imp's skull worth 500 gp (focus for *unholy aura*)

Horned Devils (2): hp 172 each; *Monster Manual* 55.

Tactics: The horned devils fly forward to attack first, during which time the azer blacksmith prepares himself by casting quickened *divine power, unholy aura*, and *righteous might* (as well as *protection from energy (cold)* if it seems that the party is using cold effects and spells). He also uses *summon monster IX* to call forth a barbed devil. He supports the devils using healing and ranged spells as long as possible before wading into melee.

If combat goes against him, Copperbelt will first try *repulsion* to keep his opponents from getting too close. He also tries to use *wall of stone* and *stone shape* to tunnel into the lava core of the volcano (his immunity to fire protects from the dangers of the heat).

Development: If the Bell of Cania has been rung, Copperbelt and one of the horned devils make their way to the bell and await further instructions. The other horned devil remains at the forge just in case someone tries to break in.

9. Banquet Hall (EL variable)

The smell of cooked meat fills the air of this huge banquet hall. Five giant-sized tables hold what remains of past meals. The far wall contains an open-air window leading out to the magma pits of the volcano. The only other door in this hall is on the east side, though it is not made of iron like the rest of the temple doors.

Creatures: At any given moment, 1d6–1 hellfire soldiers and 1d3–1 hellfire cultists are here, all fully armed and armored but otherwise enjoying a meal that's been roasted over lava. If the Bell of Cania has not been rung, consider these fire giants surprised by a party of characters bursting into their banquet hall.

Hellfire Cultist (1d3–1): hp 256 each; see page 75.

Hellfire Soldiers (1d6–1): hp 219 each; see page 72.

Development: If the Bell of Cania outside is rung (area **18**) the fire giants in here immediately rush outside to see what is going on, leaving the banquet hall empty. It takes them two minutes to get to the bell.

10. Kitchen

Shelves along the walls of this room contain food preparation items. There is a trap door on the floor in the northeast corner with a simple chain pulley and an iron pot over the hole.

The trap door opens to reveal a 100-foot drop down to the lava below.

A storage chamber in the southwest corner of the kitchen holds smoked meats, tubers, and other dry goods.

11. Lady Madori's Room (EL 17)

Beyond this door is a large chamber decorated with the overriding themes of fire and pain. A feather bed, too small to be used by a giant, sits in one corner decorated in red and black, while the rest of the room consists mainly of large pillows. An open window on the north wall gives a view of the inner wall of Hellfire Mountain, and two large murals depict scenes of men being tortured in some dark, fiery dungeon. The scent of jasmine is heavy in the air.

Creature: These are the personal chambers of Lady Madori, an advanced pleasure devil from Mephistopheles's court. Pleasure devils are an enhanced form of erinyes, specialists in the arts of seduction and corruption. Lady Madori was sent with Beltorius to make sure operations go smoothly in this temple, but she has grown bored of the fire giants.

There is a 90% chance that Lady Madori is in this chamber, lounging in her natural form. If she is not here, she is in area **22** with Beltorius, communing with the *Heart of Mephistopheles* regarding further plans of conquest.

LADY MADORI CR 17
Advanced pleasure devil
LE Medium outsider (baatezu, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Fiendish Codex 2

Init +15; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Listen +34, Spot +34

Languages Common, Giant, Infernal, *tongues*

AC 30, touch 19, flat-footed 21; Dodge, Mobility

hp 204 (24 HD); regeneration 5; **DR** 5/good and silver

Immune fire, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10 **SR** 32

Fort +20, **Ref** +23, **Will** +23

Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee *+1 cold iron short sword* +34/+29/+24/+19 (1d6+4/19–20) or melee touch +33 (poison)

Ranged *+1 flaming composite longbow* +34/+29/+24/+19 (1d8+4/x3 plus 1d6 fire)

Base Atk +24; **Grp** +28

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Spring Attack

Special Actions beguile 2/day (DC 34), *summon baatezu*

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17, +33 melee touch, +33 ranged touch)

At will—*charm monster* (DC 24), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *enthrall* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *greater command* (DC 25), *polymorph*, *produce flame*, *suggestion* (DC 23), *vampiric touch*

3/day—quickened *charm monster* (DC 24)

1/day—*plane shift* (self only), *trap the soul* (DC 30)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 29 Con 18, Int 23, Wis 24, Cha 30

Feats Ability Focus (beguile), Ability Focus (poison), Ability Focus (trap the soul), Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*charm monster*), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +37, Concentration +31, Diplomacy +41, Disguise +37 (+41 acting), Hide +36, Intimidate +39, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (religion) +26, Knowledge (the planes) +26, Listen +34, Move Silently +36, Search +33, Sense Motive +34, Spellcraft +33, Spot +34

Possessions combat gear, *+1 cold iron short sword*, *+1 flaming composite longbow* (+4 Strength), *bracers of armor* +4, black sapphire worth 21,000 gp (component for *trap the soul*)

Tongues (Su) As the spell (CL 17th), always active.

Regeneration (Ex) Good-aligned weapons and spells with the [good] descriptor deal lethal damage to Lady Madori.

Beguile (Su) Lady Madori can temporally gain control of a living creature unless it makes a DC 34 Will save. If she succeeds, that creature immediately takes a full round's worth of actions under her control. She can use this ability twice per day, and it has a range of 30 feet. This is a mind-affecting enchantment ability.

Poison (Ex) Contact, Fortitude DC 30, 1d6 Wisdom/1d6 Wisdom. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

***Summon Baatezu* (Sp)** Once a day Lady Madori can attempt to summon 2 chain devils or 6 lemures with an 80% chance of success. This ability is equivalent to a 6th-level spell at CL 19th.

Treasure: Besides her possessions, Lady Madori also possesses a copy of the *Book of Brimstone* (under the

Lady Madori

bed). A Mephistopheles-worshipping monk named Andros penned this blasphemous tome during his time spent in the archdevil's palace (after which he went insane and was subsequently lost in the frigid wastes of Cania). There are rumored to be only four copies of the book in existence.

The *Book of Brimstone* is divided into two parts, written entirely in Infernal. The first part concerns the proper worship and adoration of Mephistopheles, as well as the steps necessary to become a disciple of the archdevil. Various rituals are described within it, many of which involve gruesome sacrifice.

The second part of the book is a small collection of arcane spells, each one more evil than the previous. The amount and exact details of these spells are left up to you (the *Book of Vile Darkness* has many spells that would fit such a tome).

12. Ingrid Forgebelly's Chamber (EL 19, 20, or 21)

This is a large bedchamber, though it is spartanly furnished. A giant-sized bed on an iron frame sits in the northwestern corner, next to which rests a desk and a chair. Several stacks of paper sit unattended on the desk. In the center of the room stand two imposing statues, each formed by lava covered with a crumbling black crust. The only other feature is an intricately woven rug that rests on the floor behind the statues. The rug depicts a foreboding image of some great red devil face with an evil grin. The smell of brimstone is thick in this chamber.

This is where Ingrid Forgebelly, Vile Voice of Mephistopheles, performs her daily duties and rests in the little off-time she receives. The rug on the floor of the chamber hides a secret cache of treasure (see below). The stacks of paper on the desk are written in a combination of Giant and Infernal; characters must know both languages to decipher the writings. Essentially, they detail other fire giant tribes in the Hellfurnaces—their strengths, weaknesses, leaders, position, and other vital information.

Creatures: There is a 60% chance that Ingrid Forgebelly is in her room at any time of the day, resting or writing furiously on the stacks of paper. If she is not here then she is in the Black Chapel (area 5).

The two statues are actually hellfire golems, given to Ingrid by Beltorius as personal guards. Ingrid prefers the protection that her fire giants provide, but she is not about to throw away such a mighty gift. The two hellfire golems attack anyone who is not Ingrid Forgebelly (unless she commands otherwise).

Hellfire Golems (2) **CR 17**

LE Large construct (extraplanar)
Fiend Folio 88
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +24
Language Infernal

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 25
hp 140 (20 HD) **DR** 15/adamantine and good
Immune construct traits, magic, fire
Resists acid 20, cold 20
Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

Spd 40 ft.
Melee 2 slams +22 (1d8+7/19–20 plus 2d6 hellfire)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +26
Atk Options Great Cleave, Power Attack, hellfire
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20, +21 melee touch, +16 ranged touch)
At will—*burning hands*, *fireball* (DC 15), *flare* (DC 12), *produce flame*
3/day—*flame strike* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 25, Dex 14, Con —, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14
Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (slam), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)
Skills Climb +30, Jump +30, Spot +24

Hellfire (Ex) Those hit with the golem's slam attack take 2d6 points of hellfire damage. Creatures hitting the golem with natural weapons or unarmed strikes take hellfire damage as though hit with the golem's slam attack.
Immunity to Magic (Ex) A hellfire golem is immune to all spells and spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance except as follows: A *quench* spell seems to extinguish the golem's flames for 2d4 rounds, but it only halves the damage from the hellfire. A cold effect that deals more than 20 points of damage (after overcoming the golem's cold resistance) slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 1d6 rounds, with no save. A spell with the law or evil descriptors breaks any slow effect and cures 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage it would otherwise deal. Spells or effects with the good or chaos descriptors affect the golem normally, unless its construct traits make it immune to the spell's effect.

Ingrid Forgebelly: hp 291; see page 76.

Treasure: Underneath the fire-resistant rug on the floor is a secret trap door (Search DC 25). It requires a DC 30 Strength check to pull the iron slab up to reveal the contents of the treasure cache. An unlocked chest contains the following items: 15,000 gp, 20,000 sp, a *manual of bodily health +3*, a *+1 giant bane warhammer* (taken from a dwarf cleric that Ingrid killed long ago), and a pair of *boots of striding and springing*. The rug itself is worth 4,000 gp.

13. Volcanic Edge (EL 18 or 20)

A massive obsidian ledge overlooks a roiling lake of burning lava one hundred feet below. The southern portion of the ledge is dominated by enormous kennels built to house dogs the size of elephants. To the north stands a squat black building of uncertain function. Directly between these two buildings rests a huge bell.

Outside the main temple is a large, naturally occurring ledge that skirts around half of Hellfire Mountain's crater. It is on this ledge that the fire giants built the kennels for the Canian pit hounds (area **14**) as well as the rookery for their well-bred great horned wyverns (area **16**).

From this ledge it is a hundred-foot drop into the lava below.

Creatures: At any given time, two hellfire soldiers practice under the tutelage of a horned devil at each location marked **13** on the map. Also resting on the northern part of the ledge is the keystone of the giant's plan to invade the neighboring fire giant kingdom, a massive construct known as a hellfire engine, built by Copperbelt with the aid of Beltorius and the fire giants over the last year. This roughly-humanoid-shaped automaton is

powered by a white-hot inferno of hellfire that shines through the gaps in its armor like a burning sun. Its head is shaped like a bearded man with the horns of a stag, its mouth open impossibly wide.

HELLFIRE ENGINE **CR 19**

N Huge construct (extraplanar)
Fiendish Codex 2
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 37, touch 7, flat-footed 37
hp 282 (44 HD) **DR** 15/adamantine and good
Immune construct traits
Resists acid 10, electricity 10, sonic 10 **SR** 29
Fort +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14
Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 20 ft.
Melee* 2 slams +30 (2d6+21 plus 6d6 hellfire)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +33; **Grp** +51
Atk Options Power Attack, cold iron body, hellfire slams
Special Actions breath weapon (60-ft. cone of hellfire, 20d10, Ref DC 32 half, 1d4 rounds between uses)
*11-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 30, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
SQ death throes, hellfire shield
Feats Power Attack

Hellfire Slams (Su) A hellfire engine deals an extra 6d6 points of hellfire damage with its slam attacks.
Cold Iron Body (Ex) A hellfire engine is constructed entirely out of cold iron. Its natural weapons count as cold iron for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.
Death Throes (Ex) When destroyed, a hellfire engine explodes and deals 20d10 points of hellfire damage to everything in a 60-foot-radius burst (Reflex DC 32 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.
Hellfire Shield (Su) Any creature that strikes or touches a hellfire engine with a melee attack, as well as any creature that grapples a hellfire engine, takes 6d6 points of hellfire damage. A creature takes damage from this ability only once per turn.

Horned Devil: hp 172; *Monster Manual* 55.

Hellfire Soldiers (2): hp 219 each; see page 72.

Tactics: If a fight breaks out on the ground level, one of the fire giants from each group will attempt to release the pit hounds or wyverns (whichever they are closer to). A favorite tactic of the giants is to bull rush opponents off the edge and into the lava below.

If the fight comes to them from the sky, the horned devils will launch forward to attack while the fire giants head towards the rookery. It takes the first group five rounds to get airborne while it takes the second group ten rounds to get saddled up.

In either case, one of the giants is quick to sound the *Bell of Cania* (area **15**) before heading into the fray.

14. Pit Hound Kennel (EL 21)

A wrought-iron fence, fifteen feet tall, hedges in a square easily one hundred feet wide. Two sturdy gates open on the north and west sides of the enclosure. The ground inside the fence is noticeably scorched and blackened, as well as torn by large, jagged claws and teeth.

This is the kennel for the Canian pit hounds, sent to assist the fire giants and devils with the spreading of the word of Mephistopheles. The gates are shut but not locked.

Creatures: There are a total of twelve Canian pit hounds in Hellfire Mountain. Six of them guard the foyers into the Black Chapel, while the other six remain pent up in this kennel. The beasts are ill-tempered and ill-fed, and very eager to take chunks out of the player characters.

Canian Pit Hound (6): hp 276 each; see page 74.

15. Bell of Cania (EL variable)

Resting in an iron stand is a six-foot-tall bronze bell, its tongue almost touching the rocky ground. Leaning up against the stand is a club with a leather-encased head. A line of raised inscriptions is etched carefully into the bronze.

If someone or something attacks Hellfire Mountain with enough force to cause the fire giants to doubt their abilities, one of them makes for the Bell of Cania. Copperbelt (the azer smith) forged the bell himself, and gave it a small magical enchantment that enhances its sound.

The inscription is written in Infernal, and says the following: "Ring the Bell of Cania only in the case of an emergency." The bell has AC 9, hardness 9, and 100 hp (5 inches thick), while the iron stand has AC 9, hardness 10, and 60 hp (2 inches thick).

Development: Nobody guards the Bell of Cania, but if one of the fire giants rings it, the clear tones can be heard throughout Hellfire Mountain. All the fire giants and devils know to make their way to the bell when such an event happens. Here is a breakdown of the creatures by area.

Area 2: One of the followers of Hellfire leaves each gate and heads towards the bell (2 minutes to get there).

Area 4: Any fire giants in the Black Chapel make their way to the bell, arriving in 1 minute.

Areas 5 and 6: Any off-duty fire giant prepares for battle as quickly as possible. It takes them a total of 6 minutes to get ready and arrive at the Bell of Cania.

Area 8: Copperbelt and one of the horned devils leave the Inferno Forge to make their way to the bell, arriving in 1 minute.

Area 9: Any fire giant soldiers or cultists drop their food and make haste towards the bell, coming to the scene in 2 minutes.

Area 11: Lady Madori leaves her chamber by flying out the window, arriving at the bell in 1 minute.

Area 12: Ingrid Forgebelly and her two hellfire golems immediately make their way to the Bell of Cania. It takes them 2 minutes to get there.

Area 13: If any fire giants or horned devils remain on the ledge, they also make their way to the bell (in 5 rounds).

Area 19: Any remaining horned devils use *greater teleport* to arrive in 3 rounds.

Area 21: Beltorius arrives on the scene after communing with the *Heart of Mephistopheles*. It takes him 1 minute (he uses *greater teleport* like the horned devils).

In addition, there is a 20% chance that each of the aerial patrols hears the sound (roll separately for each one if they are still alive), arriving on the scene in 1d6 minutes.

Treasure: The Bell of Cania is worth 10,000 gp if it can be taken out of the volcano and sold (it weighs 2,000 lbs and is a Large object).

Development: There are a total of 46 hellfire soldiers, 14 hellfire cultists, 10 great horned wyverns, 12 Canian pit hounds, and 10 horned devils, in addition to Lady Madori, Copperbelt, Ingrid Forgebelly, and Beltorius, and all of them respond if given enough time. Although it is possible for the PCs to take them down piecemeal as they emerge, it is likely that they will be overwhelmed unless they first reduce the odds.

16. Great Horned Wyvern Rookery (EL 23)

A large black stone building squats in the corner of the volcano's rocky edge. The smell of refuse is strong, and there is no roof over the top.

This is where the great horned wyverns have grown up strong and powerful under the watchful eyes of the fire giants. The door is not locked.

Creatures: There are ten great horned wyverns in this nest. Four of them are usually out on patrol, while the other six remain here. They spend their days eating (they are fed by one of the off-duty fire giants once every six hours), sleeping, and nipping at each other. The fire giants developed a technique to increase the potency of the wyverns' poison through a diet of special meats.

The wyverns are each chained to the floor with a large iron collar, though the creatures are tame enough that they do not need them any longer and the iron has lost much of its strength (break DC 24). The collars are chained to a large iron pole in the center of the rookery; each chain is 100 feet long.

Great Horned Wyverns (6): hp 304 each; see page 72.

17. Hellfire Mountain Lava

The boiling lava of Hellfire Mountain is one hundred feet below the edge. Refer to page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.

18. Devil Hole

The entrance into the resting place for the devils is a 20-foot-by-20-foot tunnel hidden by a *permanent image* that makes it look like part of the Island of Magma. The hole is only twenty feet above the lava.

All the devils have the ability to use *greater teleport*, so they usually don't fly through this hidden entrance to their lair (most of the fire giants don't even know it exists).

19. Nest of Devils (EL 20)

This is where the horned devils spend their off-time away from the fire giants of Hellfire Mountain. The chamber itself has no furnishings, though the ceiling is thirty feet high (the horned devils sleep hanging from the ceiling like bats). The devils also have a small pile of treasure in a chest in the northeastern corner of the room.

Creatures: There are a total of ten horned devils in the temple. At any given time, two of them are leading the aerial patrols, two of them are assisting the fire giants in area **13**, and two of them are assisting the blacksmith Copperbelt in area **8**. The remaining four usually stay in this chamber, performing exercises and otherwise honing their abilities.

Horned Devils (4): hp 172 each; *Monster Manual* 55.

Trap: The large iron chest in the northeast corner is both locked (DC 30 Open Lock) and trapped. The trap itself was built in the Nine Hells, and is devilishly simple in concept: a small needle coated with dragon bile poison strikes at one of the fingers of the person trying to pick the lock.

Poisoned Iron Chest: CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +20 melee touch (1 plus dragon bile poison); Search DC 35; Disable Device DC 35.

Treasure: A large iron chest in the corner of this cavernous chamber holds the sum of the devils' hoarded treasure. Inside the chest are: a *cloak of resistance +4*, *a staff of power* (fully charged), and four vials of dragon bile poison.

20. Island of Magma (EL 19)

A tall spire rises a hundred feet from the lava below, setting it level with the ledge that skirts the volcano's inner wall. Upon the spire looms an imposing structure built entirely out of iron. The front of the building faces south and is built to resemble a leering devil face, whose open mouth holds the double doors leading to whatever is inside. Flanking the door are two statuesque guardians, each of them ten feet tall and seemingly composed of molten magma covered with blackened crusts. The ledge in front of the devil face is thirty feet wide.

Creatures: The two hellfire golems guarding the entrance have strict orders to allow only the principles of the temple inside the sacred chamber of the ruby *Heart*. While unimaginative, the golems attack without mercy.

Hellfire golems (2): hp 140 each; page 80.

21. The Heart of Hellfire Mountain (EL 23)

A large, sparsely decorated room lies beyond the great iron doors, dominated by the presence of a towering blackened statue at the northern end. The statue is of a tall, handsome man with unfurled bat wings and curled horns at his temples. In his outstretched hands rests a ruby the size of a man's head. The ruby pulsates and glows with an eerie, malevolent red light that is the only source of illumination in the room.

This is the chamber that holds the *Heart of Mephistopheles*, the true power within Hellfire Mountain. This is also where the pit fiend Beltorius spends most of his time.

Creatures: Beltorius is the only creature in this chamber, and he laughs and attacks the party if they enter, proclaiming that, "Victory is assured with the power of Mephistopheles."

BELTORIUS CR 21
Male pit fiend fighter 1
LE Large outsider (baatezu, evil, extraplanar, lawful)
Monster Manual 57

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Listen +29, Spot +29
Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Ignan, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.
Aura fear 20-ft. radius (DC 27)

AC 49, touch 14, flat-footed 46
hp 238 (19 HD), regeneration 5 **DR** 15/good and silver
Immune fire, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10 **SR** 32
Fort +21, **Ref** +19, **Will** +21

Spd 30 ft. fly 40 ft. (average)
Melee* *+2 speed heavy flail* +30/+30/+25/+20/+15 (2d8+27/17–20) and 2 wings +26 (2d6+9) and bite +26 (4d6+9 plus disease and poison) and tail slap +26 (2d8+9)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +19; **Grp** +36
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Power Attack, constrict 2d8+26, improved grab (tail slap)
Special Actions *summon baatezu*
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)
At will—*blasphemy* (DC 25), *create undead*, *fireball* (DC 21), greater dispel magic, greater teleport (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *invisibility*, *magic circle against good*, *mass hold monster* (DC 27), *persistent image* (DC 23), *power word stun*, *unholy aura* (DC 26)
3/day—quickened *fireball* (DC 21)
1/day—*meteor swarm* (DC 27)
1/year—*wish* (CL 20, DC 27)
*3-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 37, Dex 27, Con 27, Int 26, Wis 26, Cha 26
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (heavy flail), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*fireball*)
Skills Balance +7, Bluff +29, Climb +32, Concentration +29, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +29 (+31 acting), Hide +22, Intimidate +32, Jump +38, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +29, Knowledge (religion) +29, Listen +29, Move Silently +26, Search +29, Spellcraft +31, Spot +29, Survival +8, Swim +14, Tumble +28
Possessions combat gear, *+4 mithral full plate*, *+2 speed heavy flail*, *ring of protection +2*

Tactics: There are two threats to contend with in this room. The first is the pit fiend Beltorius, who possesses specialized equipment to assist him in combating the party. Beltorius uses *greater teleport* if reduced to less than 50 hit points, escaping to a cave ten miles away.

The other threat is the *Heart of Mephistopheles* itself. The ruby *Heart*, though intelligent, simply watches the combat ensue. If it looks like Beltorius is losing, the heart uses its silenced *dominate monster* on the strongest-looking party member, turning him against the others. If that doesn't work, it launches its corrupted *firebolts* and uses *gust of wind* to drive the party away. Refer to the sidebar for details on its personality and actions.

Development: The only way to truly end the festering evil of Hellfire Mountain is to destroy both Beltorius and the *Heart of Mephistopheles*. Beltorius is smart, but arrogant, and canny PCs should be able to trap him within the chamber and finish him off once and for all.

If the party has not done any research into the *Heart of Mephistopheles*, they will have a difficult time trying to destroy it. One option is to simply hurl it into the lava of Hellfire Mountain; although this won't destroy the artifact, it at least keeps it dormant for a while.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

There are several different ways this adventure can end for the party. If the PCs destroy the *Heart of Mephistopheles*, Beltorius, and Ingrid Forgebelly, the power of Hellfire Mountain is broken, and whatever fire giants and devils are left flee into the mountains. Mephistopheles does not look kindly upon anyone breaking his artifacts and destroying his temples, and is certain to find out that the characters are to blame. By what means the archdevil exacts his revenge is left up to you, and the end result may be a confrontation with Mephistopheles himself (or at least one of his aspects).

If the party destroys the *Heart of Mephistopheles* but Beltorius and/or Ingrid Forgebelly escapes, their victory is incomplete. Beltorius is a cagey opponent who does not like to lose, especially if losing means going back to Mephistopheles without the ruby *Heart*. The pit fiend contacts the archdevil shortly after the incident and is ordered to exact revenge upon the

The Heart of Mephistopheles

The malevolent *Heart of Mephistopheles* is an artifact of terrible power and intellect. It appears as a large multifaceted ruby, roughly a foot wide, that glows with a hellish red light (shedding light as a torch). The heart is intelligent (Int 19, Wis 10, Cha 19, Ego 31) and lawful evil. It can communicate through telepathy and speech (it speaks Common, Infernal, Draconic, Giant, and Dwarven), though it prefers the subtle influences of telepathy to traditional speech. The ruby is supernaturally resilient to attacks (AC 14, hardness 50, hp 100).

The *Heart of Mephistopheles* was created with the purpose of spreading the influence and power of its archdevil creator, and to this end it was imbued with several powerful abilities. Once per day, the heart can use a silenced *dominate monster* as a spell-like ability (Will save DC 29). Up to three times per day the heart can produce a corrupted *firebolt* (10d6 fire, save DC 23, half divine damage, otherwise as *lightning bolt*) and *gust of wind*. The *Heart of Mephistopheles* has Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, and Knowledge (the planes) +14.

In addition to its conventional powers, the ruby *Heart* radiates an extraplanar aura that only affects creatures from the Nine Hells of Baator. Any such creature within 1 mile of the *Heart of Mephistopheles* is considered to be on its home plane. The devils and other extraplanar creatures of Hellfire Mountain are immune to such spells as *dismissal* as long as they are within a mile of the Island of Magma (area **20**).

To destroy this artifact, a cleric of a good-aligned god must cast *raise dead*, *resurrection*, or *true resurrection* (or an equivalent spell) upon the heart. Afterwards, a crack appears in the ruby, and it is subject to physical damage (its hardness rating drops to 10). If reduced to 0 hp, the *Heart of Mephistopheles* explodes, dealing 10d6 points of hellfire damage to all creatures within a 50-foot radius.

Strong conjuration, enchantment, and evocation; CL 20th, Weight 20 lb.

Scaling the Adventure

To adapt "Heart of Hellfire Mountain" for groups of characters lower than 20th level, reduce NPC character levels by an amount equal to that by which the average level of the characters deviates from 20th level.

Reduce the HD of the great horned wyverns and Canian pit hounds by three (for 19th level) or six (for 18th level). Remove the Hellfire Engine from area **13**, and cut the number of horned devils to 8. Finally, give the PCs more time to deal with each group of foes before the rest of the complex reacts

characters in the most painful way possible. Exactly how Beltorius plans his revenge is again left up to you, but it is certain that he won't be going alone in the endeavor.

Ingrid Forgebelly, if alive, retreats into a dark cave somewhere in the Hellfurnaces, there to continue her worship of the Canian archdevil. She may return to power at some point, but for at least a little while her confidence in her own abilities is completely shot.

If the PCs fail to destroy the *Heart of Mephistopheles*, the archdevil's power remains tangible in the Material Plane. As long as the ruby *Heart* exists, a new Temple of Hellfire springs up at some point (how long depends on what the party does with the artifact). It is entirely possible that the *Heart of Mephistopheles* takes control of one of the PCs and attempts to flee in the possession of the dominated character. This could lead on an interesting chase into the Nine Hells, where the *Heart* knows it can be protected.

In any case, King Snurreson honors his end of their agreement if they can prove to him that the temple has been destroyed or abandoned (he sends Trengor Fireback to verify the party's story, which is all the proof he needs). Otherwise, the severed head of Beltorius or the shards of the *Heart of Mephistopheles* also suffice.

While still evil, King Snurreson can nonetheless be an ally to the party should they ever require the services of his court or kingdom down the road. He will not forget the party's service, and knows now that they can be trusted. Perhaps he will have another task for them to complete now that they have proven themselves.

APPENDIX: VILE SPELLS

"The Heart of Hellfire Mountain" uses material originally presented in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. The relevant material is reprinted here.

Hellfire

Evocation [Evil]
Level: Diabolic 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area: 5-ft.-radius spread
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster creates a small explosion of brimstone and fire that deals 3d6 points of hellfire damage.

Hellfire Storm

Evocation [Evil]
Level: Diabolic 7
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Area: 20-ft.-radius spread

As hellfire, except as noted above and the spell deals 5d6 points hellfire damage.

Beltorius

What's to say about "Weird" Dave Olsen? I'm a working stiff in a windowless cubicle who dreams of giants, fire, and devils between answering the phone when it rings. My hobbies include playing D&D, reading DUNGEON *and* DRAGON*, and finding out the best ways to end the lives of the PC's in my home* GREYHAWK *campaign.*

RUNNING A GAME IS HARD TO DO

PART 3: KEEPING TRACK OF EVERYTHING

BY MONTE COOK
BY KYLE HUNTER

While the rules may cover every contingency imaginable (and of course they don't, but stay with me here), sometimes it's the application of the rules that makes DMing difficult. This month, I'm going farther afield by offering some advice for keeping track of all these rules.

ALL THESE $#%* MODIFIERS

Once in a game I was running, a player made an attack roll against a foe (I think it was an ogre) and missed. When I informed her that the ogre blocked her blow just barely with his shield, she immediately looked down at her character sheet and replied, "Hang on, I'm sure I can find another +1 here somewhere..."

This is not an uncommon occurrence. You've likely heard a player say something similar—there are so many modifiers in the game that it really is easy to lose track of one. And isn't it funny that no one struggles to find every last negative modifier, only the positive ones?

Player Modifiers Versus DM Modifiers

The first step in handling all the different modifiers is to determine which ones the player should be remembering, and which ones the DM should handle. Basically, players should keep track of everything that is unique to them and fairly constant. For an attack roll, for example, this includes the base attack bonus, ability score modifier, weapon bonus, feats, item modifiers, and spell effects. Players should have this sort of information totaled, so that they can just roll the die and add one number. This often entails listing multiple attack bonuses on the character sheet. A well-prepared barbarian, for example, has not only his melee and ranged attack bonuses, but also his totaled bonuses while raging.

DMs, on the other hand, can—and probably should—keep track of all situational modifiers. The easiest way to do this is to just modify the target number rather than the roll or check. Regarding an attack roll, if the PC has higher ground, just subtract 1 from the AC. It's easier to do this than to tell the player what situational modifiers are in play and then wait for him to refigure his attack roll result. It keeps the game moving faster (but don't refuse to tell the player what modifiers affect him if he asks).

If you don't have a great head for numbers just remember the DM's best friend rule: if the attacker seems hindered in any way by terrain, position, or some other situation, add 2 to the target's AC. If they seem aided by the situation, subtract 2 from the AC.

The DM can also apply certain spell effect modifiers when they affect everyone in the group (like *bless*, *haste*, or bardic songs). For example, *bless* effectively makes all ACs one lower than normal. This is easy for one person to apply, rather than having each player remember the +1 bonus on his turn. Just make sure that everyone understands who's handling such bonuses to avoid modifiers being applied twice or not at all.

DMs should always be ready to take quick notes. Have a set of post-its handy to stick right on your notes or in a module or *Monster Manual*. Some of this can be handled ahead of time. If you know the balor is going into the fight with *unholy aura* going, stick a post-it on the page next to its stats before the game starts and add in all the changed stats. During a session, plop a note near the stat block in a module if the NPC is affected by *slow* or *bane* and record the changed stats. Don't just jot down the modifier. Refigure the total bonus affected right then and there. That way, you do the math once, not every round.

Determine Modifier Significance

The second step is even simpler: determining if a modifier is worth remembering. If a PC is attacking an AC 11 foe with a +20 attack bonus, it's not going to matter if he's attacking from higher ground or if he's sickened and suffers a –2 to attack rolls. He's only going to miss on a 1. And the example doesn't have to be that drastic. If the target's AC is 15, stop calculating an attack roll once you'll well above that. An attack roll of 16 hits AC 15 exactly the same as an attack roll of 24. Similarly, if you're sitting behind the DM's screen while the 10th level PC fighter is attacking an AC 15 monster and you see the player struggling with adding in all his modifiers, just look over at the die roll he made. If it's over, say, 10, you know he hit even if he's got some negative modifiers. Just interrupt with a polite, "You hit."

This of course goes for skill checks, saves, and other rolls as well. You could start a table rule requiring players to call out their die rolls as they're made. Since you know the target number and probably have a rough idea of what the PC will be adding, you can often determine success or failure even before they add it all up, just by knowing the die roll. If the save DC is 17 and the 6th level PC rolls a 16, you can just move on.

It's frustrating to call for party Listen checks against a DC of 15 and then wait for people to make their rolls and add their modifiers, only to hear results like "34," "29," and "22." That's a waste of game time. At some point, it's OK for the DM to just skip over the rolls altogether when success is truly a foregone conclusion. In the above example, just tell them what they hear—you can even say, "Listen checks aren't needed to hear..."

Similarly, you can save yourself some headaches if you do what I call the "easy stuff" first. For example, miss chances are easy, in that they never have modifiers. Displacement, for instance, gives a 50% miss chance. Roll for that first, because if it indicates a miss, there's no need to do the math to figure out the attacker's attack roll (and all applicable modifiers). In other words, establish a priority of steps. If a PC is casting *lightning bolt* at a foe, first determine if the foe is immune to lightning. If so, then don't worry about spell resistance, saves, evasion, or damage rolls. Likewise, if the SR check fails, there's no need to worry about save DCs or damage rolls.

Handle attack rolls in this order, skipping any step that doesn't apply:

1. Miss chance
2. Other all-or-nothing effects, like *mirror image* or deflect arrows
3. Attack roll versus Armor Class
4. Damage roll

Handle spellcasting in this order:

1. Determine immunity
2. Spell resistance
3. Saving throw
4. Damage roll or other effect

KEEPING TRACK OF ONGOING EFFECTS

As the game goes on, a character might have *invisibility*, *fly*, *mind blank*, and *protection from acid* cast on him. Not only does the player need to know that stuff, but the DM does too. And, in the best-case scenario, the DM shouldn't have to ask or be constantly reminded.

DM: *"You fall into the pit trap."*

Player: *"But I'm flying."*

DM: *"Oh yeah."*

Player: *"But now I know there's a trap there. Watch out for the pit trap there, guys."*

DM: *"Hrm. Well, in that case, as you hover in the air, you provide an excellent target for the hidden archers who—"*

Player: *"But I'm invisible."*

DM: *"Oh yeah."*

Player: *"I guess there are archers hiding in the room, guys."*

DM: *"Hrm..."*

Once again, note cards can come to the beleaguered DM's aid. Have each player write down effects of importance currently affecting his character on a note card and then place it in front of him, facing you. The DM then has constant reminders and can easily double-check who's invisible, for example, as well as who can see invisibility among the PCs.

Similarly, a DM can use cards as tools to remind both himself and the player of ongoing conditions and effects the PC probably doesn't want. One thing as a DM that I always forget is the dreaded second poison save that's supposed to come around a minute after the first one. A card with nice big block letters that say "POISONED" in front of the player until they attempt that second save would take care of that quite easily.

Players should be made responsible for keeping track of their own spells' durations and effects. If a PC creates a *blade barrier*, it's up to her to remember when it goes away. That means that the players, as well as the DM, must keep track of rounds passing. One way to do that is with a large die (probably a d10 or d20) on the table, used as a counter so that each round it gets moved from 1 to 2 to 3 and so on. Players can use this same method to count down spell durations as well. If a spell lasts 9 rounds, just put a d10 on 9 and then turn it down one number each round. The DM can use this as well, for NPC-created effects. Numbered cards work just as handily and eliminate the risk of someone picking up the round-counting die to make a roll by accident.

Lastly, disabuse your players of the notion that if they don't help you remember the detrimental stuff affecting their character (like the penalty for being sickened or the fact that they are stunned when you ask them for their action), you won't help them remember the beneficial modifiers and effects. Encourage them to be honest with you and pay them by being honest right back. Reward the player who reminds you that the monster he's fighting has a miss chance because he's in a thick fog. The key to keeping track of everything is open communication. It's a game, not a contest.

KEEPING TRACK OF NPCS

The players only need to keep track of one character, while the DM has to worry about many all at once. When each NPC has its own set of ongoing effects and special modifiers, this can get out of hand.

The best way of handling all these things are through short, concise, and well-organized stat blocks. The trick is to create them however you want, and in whatever format works best for you. Don't feel compelled to make your notes look like a professional product. Make your own decisions for what stats are important. If you can, keep single NPCs to one page to avoid flipping or losing pages. Don't forget to leave room to scribble necessary notes during the game session itself.

I'll say it again: be concise. Remember that most NPCs are only "on stage" for a few minutes. NPC foes likely only get to take three or four actions at most before they are defeated, so don't plan for much beyond that. It may, in fact, be a waste to ever give an NPC more than, say, three different attacks, spells, or abilities, unless you're trying to stress his versatility.

Build your spellcasting NPC with common spell effects already figured in. If he always has *mage armor* cast, just add +4 to his AC right off. In the unlikely event that the spells are dispelled, suppressed, or otherwise ignored, you can deal with that more easily when the time comes (if it does) than trying to remember it all every round. Likewise, if an NPC has Power Attack, determine ahead of time how much he's usually going to shift from attack bonus to damage and figure that right into the stats.

While on the topic of feats, don't neglect to use "fire and forget" feats that just add to stats to make things simpler. Iron Will adds +2 to Will saves. Nothing for a DM to remember, ever. Nice and simple.

In fact, that idea really goes to the heart of my advice for creating and using NPCs in your game. To keep things simple, don't even figure in or record the stuff you won't ever need. You're never going to need to know what the orc guard's Craft (weaponsmith) score is. Really, all you're likely to need is AC, hit points, and attack and damage bonuses. Maybe his Listen modifier and one crucial feat, like Combat Reflexes. Because in the end, the orc guard is unlikely to be around for more than a couple of rounds. The real secret of keeping track of NPC information is to truly understand what you need to run an NPC and then provide only that information for yourself. It'll save you some heartache as well—virtually every DM has seen a lovingly crafted NPC that took all afternoon to stat up fully get taken down in a round and a half, with the players already looking for the next foe.

Of course, one thing that can be a pain is all of the spells, spell-like abilities, and magic item effects involved with an NPC, particularly a powerful spellcaster. Mark the pages that have the descriptions of the most likely spells and abilities he'll use in the rulebook, and go over them right before the game. When possible, jot down the relevant notes for an NPC's favorite spells right on the character sheet. "*Lightning bolt*, 8d6 damage, Reflex save DC 16." That's all you need to know.

SCREWING UP

So what do you do when it all comes apart? When you forget to ask a character for the second poison save, or when you realize that the PC's fireball couldn't have killed the demon because it suffers only half damage from fire?

You live with it, and move on. Don't backtrack, unless a PC's life is on the line. If a character actually died and shouldn't have, go back and make it right somehow. Fudge if you have to—say, "Your fallen friend's eyes flutter open. He's made of sterner stuff than you thought and isn't dead after all!" Otherwise, just assume that it all worked out the way it was supposed to. The character evidently made that second poison save. Going back in time and resetting everything, saying, "All that didn't happen," bogs the game down and drags everyone out of the fantasy. Just keep going. Don't even acknowledge the mistake unless you have to.

And even if everyone notices, no one will remember by next session.

Monte Cook is the author of the Dungeon Master's Guide. *Check out his publishing company, Malhavoc Press, at montecook.com.*

ORDEALS OF METTLE

BY TIM HITCHCOCK,
BY KYLE HUNTER,

While in contemporary society the concept of "innocent until proven guilty" typically involves testimonies and facts reviewed by a jury of one's peers, societies strongly bound to spiritual or supernatural forces sometimes base an accused person's innocence on his ability to survive a physical test. They presume the trial can only be survived with divine aid; aid which a divine agent would only offer to the innocent.

This article presents seven trials that political or religious orders might use to judge lawbreakers, induct officials, or otherwise test a person's moral fiber and fortitude.

BARREL OF SPIKES

For this trial, the individual is sealed inside a large barrel, into which is driven a score of long iron spikes. The barrel is then hitched to a wild stallion on a 20-foot tether, and once the stallion is released it runs off, dragging the bouncing barrel behind until the container bursts. The individual passes the test if he is able to walk away after the barrel ruptures.

Mechanics: The bouncing barrel does 3d6 points of piercing damage per round to anyone inside it until the barrel breaks in 3d4 rounds.

Each round, the individual can attempt to brace himself inside the barrel with a Strength check or Escape Artist check to

reduce the amount of damage he suffers as follows: DC 15 for 2d6, DC 20 for 1d6, and DC 25 for no damage.

CHAIN DROP

In this trial, the individual is chained to a 200-pound weight and dropped into a body of water with a minimum depth of 20 feet. To prove his innocence or worthiness, the victim must sink all the way to the bottom, then free himself and swim to surface. To prove the bottom was touched, he must surface with a handful of mud, silt, sand, or similar material that lines the bottom of the body of water into which he was plunged. If the individual drowns or is unable to prove he touched bottom before surfacing, he fails the test.

Mechanics: For the duration of the trial, the individual is at risk of drowning. The body sinks at a rate 10 feet per round, so the deeper the water, the more dangerous the challenge. A character who takes no action, free actions, or move actions can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution score. After that, he must make a Constitution check to avoid drowning (Constitution check DC 10 + 1 per previous check).

There are several ways of beating this challenge, and individuals can choose to swim with the weight (encumbrance penalty doubled for Swim check), make a DC 35 Escape Artist check, break the chain with a DC 28 Strength check, or make a DC 30 Open Lock check.

DIRT CASKET

The individual is buried up to his neck near the lair of a particular animal or vermin (such as a bear, or maybe even a flock of surly webbirds), and then his head is covered with some form of bait. He must remain buried for the next 24 hours, during which time he can receive no aid. At some point, the creature comes forth and licks the candidate's head clean. The candidate must remain still while this happens to avoid suffering injury. If the creature senses the helpless individual's fear, it attacks. If the victim can remain still and fearless, he survives the challenge.

Mechanics: Being licked clean takes 2d4 rounds. Each round, the individual must make a Will save (DC 10 + the creature's HD) to avoid becoming scared and flinching. Wild empathy, *speak with animals*, and similar abilities can also help the individual succeed.

FLAMING CASK

In this trial, a 25-pound wooden keg of alchemist's fire is strapped to the individual's back like a backpack and lit on fire. The individual must then run through a prepared course (or crowded streets, for an evil organization) for 600 feet before he reaches a large pool of water where he can leap in and extinguish the load. If the individual fails to get to the pool before exploding, he fails the test.

Mechanics: The burning barrel deals 1d6 points of fire damage per round. In addition, each round the running character must make a DC 15 reflex save to keep from jostling it so hard that it explodes, doing 5d6 points of fire damage in a 10-foot-radius burst. Anyone else in the blast radius can make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid this damage. Regardless of whether or not the checks are successful, the barrel automatically explodes on its own in 1d6+5 rounds.

GAUNTLET DUELING

Gauntlet dueling is a violent and bloody sport whereby two contestants willingly manacle their left arms together across a round wooden table. The manacles are then nailed down to the center of the table, giving the opponents just enough room to sit. Contestants are then bound to a chair and their right hands fitted with gauntlets (or in some regions, spiked gauntlets). Upon the fight director's signal, they pummel each other mercilessly until one of the contestants is unconscious or dead. The only rule is that at no time can they stand up. Gauntlet dueling is highly illegal, making matches difficult to find. Most of the time, they are held in the backrooms and basements of seedy alehouses where high-stakes bets can be wagered.

Mechanics: Both participants are considered entangled for the duration of the fight, but otherwise the results should be determined by running the combat between the two.

SCORPION BOX

This old trick is a simple test of faith wherein a candidate must place his hand into a sacred location that is home to a venomous creature. The most common version of this test is that of a large box with several hand-sized holes in it, several of which house scorpions. Variations include a coral formation with a toxic anemone, a rocky crevasse of vipers, or even having the candidate peer into a cockatrice cave. If the candidate is uninjured by his leap of faith, he is considered worthy.

Mechanics: This is a test of probability, so set the odds for such a challenge in advance. Each time a hand is placed in a hole, there's a 25% chance that hole contains a Tiny monstrous scorpion that immediately attempts to sting the intruder. For more dangerous tests, you can either adjust this chance upward, or you can require the contestant to repeat the test multiple times, selecting a different hole in each round.

TEST OF SANITY

During this trial, the candidate makes mental contact with an insane supernatural presence such as an allip, gibbering mouther, demon, mind flayer, or spirit naga. The contact can be via a spell, other magical means, direct exposure in cases where the presence has been contained in a special location (such as a haunted cavern, an enclosed cell or crystalline chamber, an ultra-dimensional tomb, etc.). The candidate is exposed to the presence long enough to be forced to save against its special ability. A *medallion of thoughts* is the standard method in which the candidate is made to mentally contact the creature; failure to comply invites punishment of another sort.

Mechanics: The individual must survive the creature's special attack. Those able to resist the effect pass the test. Those who fail are often surrendered to the contacted creature.

100 WIZARDLY KNICK-KNACKS

BY LAWRENCE KAPTURE,
BY KYLE HUNTER,

Ever been in a wizard's lab with nothing but a table and an alembic? The mysterious objects collected by spellcasters from bizarre places can provide both adventure hooks and valuable information about their pasts, not to mention clues as to their current schemes and desires. Sprinkling a few interesting knick-knacks into a room's description can imbue an NPC wizard with pizzazz, or make a foe's mysterious laboratory a haunting display.

The following list is intended as inspiration—swap out monster names and items as you see fit. All that matters is that the end product is astonishing, because even looting can be a chance to tell a story.

1 Moth-eaten barghest pelt used as table covering.
2 Boots made from baby dragon skin.
3 Articulated brass shield-guardian arm.
4 Stuffed grig in a fierce pose.
5 A petrified succubus head.
6 Jar of roper filaments in murky oil.
7 Dried gorgonbane tea leaves (+1 resistance bonus on saves against petrifaction for 24 hours if ingested).
8 Single fiendish wasp in a honey jar, with holes punched in the top.
9 Tapestry depicting a fight between two warriors. The scene changes incrementally from one viewing to the next.
10 Gold apple with a gold worm inside.
11 Stirge mounted on a plaque, engraved with the name "Stabby."
12 Cracked shield mounted on the wall and emblazoned with a rampant boar.

13 Glass angel-shaped oil lamp.
14 Dissected imp pinned to a board.
15 Wooden box containing a set of surgical tools and a mostly-used bottle of *oil of magic weapon* with enough left for one sling bullet, dart, or arrow.
16 Spent wand made of redwood and inlaid with chips of jade.
17 Potted assassin vine seedling that undulates and can trap mice or fingers.
18 Mithral spyglass with blue lenses.
19 Adamantine cage for a cat-sized animal.
20 Darkwood violin.
21 Jug of green slime under the table, next to two partially dissolved paintbrushes.
22 Green glass goggles.
23 Diary with most of its pages ripped out. The remaining page reads, "Today I begin to record my epic progress towards world domination..."
24 Animated satin-covered stool.
25 Masterwork sextant.
26 Quarter-inch lump of ochre jelly, squirming around in a glass flask sealed with lead.
27 Defaced holy symbol of Pelor.
28 Silk shawl patterned with images of yochlols and made of drider silk.
29 Shattered ioun stone.
30 Cracked crystal that makes skin tingle when touched.
31 Large petrified dragonfly used as a table.
32 Lead mold for a ring carved with manticore designs.
33 Small sketchbook filled with unlabeled pictures of otherworldly beings.
34 Basilisk egg that has been drained through a tiny hole.
35 Pipe with a bowl carved in the shape of a nameless squid god.
36 A bird perch made from achaierai bone.
37 Elaborately carved hourglass filled with opalescent silt.
38 Howler skull with *continual light* on it.
39 Deck of cards bearing illustrations of constellations.
40 Tiny shrieker sporelings hidden behind a stack of books on alchemy.
41 Storm giant's molar that lets off tiny bolts of electricity when metal is nearby.
42 Clay jar of stale gorgon breath.
43 Mummified hawk.
44 Dried hellhound paw on a chain, with several large keys attached to it.
45 Small amber sculpture of a lillend.
46 Silent whistle that alerts a canine outsider to the blower's presence.
47 Statue of a voluptuous orc goddess.
48 Fist-sized dodecahedron carved from a shard of obsidian.
49 Dinosaur tooth.
50 Murky, algae-infested tank swarming with illithid tadpoles.
51 Miniature portrait of a beautiful young noblewoman. On the back are the words, "To the charming scholar who has bound my heart."
52 Tiny lightning bolt ricocheting around inside a green glass ball. If the ball is smashed, the bolt strikes the nearest person for 1d4+1 points of damage.
53 Larval rust monster set up for dissection.
54 Clay seals with the wizard's name written in Infernal.
55 Pseudodragon skeleton mounted in a childish diorama.
56 Alchemically silvered hypodermic needle containing a magically preserved red slaad egg.
57 Small cactus in a pot sculpted into a leering demon face.
58 Umber hulk claw in the process of being fashioned into a shield.
59 Stainless nonmagic iron flask emblazoned with a stylized tarrasque.
60 Chunk of glass with an eye in it. The eye turns to follow whoever is closest to it.
61 Box filled with clay beads inscribed with draconic letters.
62 A small box growing spotty orange mushrooms. Next to the box is an ashtray filled with chewed mushroom stems.
63 A chapbook of hymns to Erythnul.
64 A masterwork morningstar being used as a fire poker.
65 Scale model of the wizard's future royal palace.
66 Two couatl feathers prepared as quills.
67 Half-finished scroll of *fireball*.
68 Twitching length of kyton chain.
69 Animated monkey skeleton.
70 Copper dragon scale holding a moldy wedge of cheese.
71 Bonsai tree sculpted in the shape of a harpy.
72 Massive tome on diabolical contracts. Pressed between its pages like a flower is the corpse of a long-dead kobold.
73 A book of elven love poems.
74 Broken homunculus in a box.
75 Severed gargoyle claw being used as a paperweight.
76 Cracked stone cylinder engraved with glyphs. The glyphs tell the story of the lich whose phylactery it once was.
77 Fire-blackened nightmare hoof.
78 Lock of nymph's hair in a small, velvet-lined jewelry box.
79 Purple worm stinger wedged in a leathery chunk of dragon hide.
80 Pan pipes attached to a bellows contraption mounted on a small bicycle.
81 Sealed glass tank full of spider eater eggs.
82 Gold-plated unicorn horn.
83 Drinking mug fashioned out of a troll skull and lined with patterned lead.
84 Slate covered with ideographic equations in bioluminescent chalk.
85 Ivory cane topped with a silver sphinx.
86 Tiny stone teapot shaped like a grinning, obese goblin.
87 What appears to be a hot round rock in a stone box, but is actually a thoqqua egg.
88 Rug woven with kaleidoscopic patterns that change over time.
89 Living vargouille attached to a three-foot-long chain bolted to the floor.
90 Diminutive model windmill that generates tiny fields of electricity, heat, or cold.
91 Sealed glass tubes filled with free-floating *dancing lights*.
92 Silver pyramid frame, one foot on a side, with a plate of food inside.
93 Crystal that generates a diminutive illusion of a dragon when light shines on it.
94 Ebonwood carving of a xill.
95 Mirror endowed with an illusion that makes the wizard who owns it appear to be standing behind anyone looking into it.
96 Small porcelain statue of a unicorn marked with all the standard butcher's cuts in dotted red lines.
97 Piece of paper listing the adventurer's names. Next to their names are the names of their friends and family.
98 Half-finished painting of an alien landscape. At the center of the landscape stands a single young girl dressed in white and holding a large leather tome tightly to her chest.
99 Barrel filled with roc feathers.
100 Dried toad on a leather thong. The name "Spivey" is inked on the toad.

Downer XII

Fool's Errand

Out of frustration, I raided the kenku lair on my own. Their boss, a chronotyryn time lord, was one of the contestants in a grand contest for godhood. Luckily, another contestant, the copper dragon Kroiph, showed up to save my bacon. These guys are seriously out of my league.

WELL, IT SEEMS MR. KROIPH HAS TAKEN THE LEAD, AND THE CHRONOTYRYN HAS LEFT THE GAME.
OFF TRACK BETTING, SIGIL
EXCELLENT! I BELIEVE YOU OWE ME 150,000 GP, QUEEN WENCH.

I HUMBLY SUBMIT MYSELF,
BENZINGER KALRO
PRINCE OF THIEVES, SHADOW PUPPETEER AND ACTING MAYOR OF OUBLIETTE,
AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE TIME-CROW
IN THIS TOURNAMENT TO CROWN THE *GOD OF GAMING.*

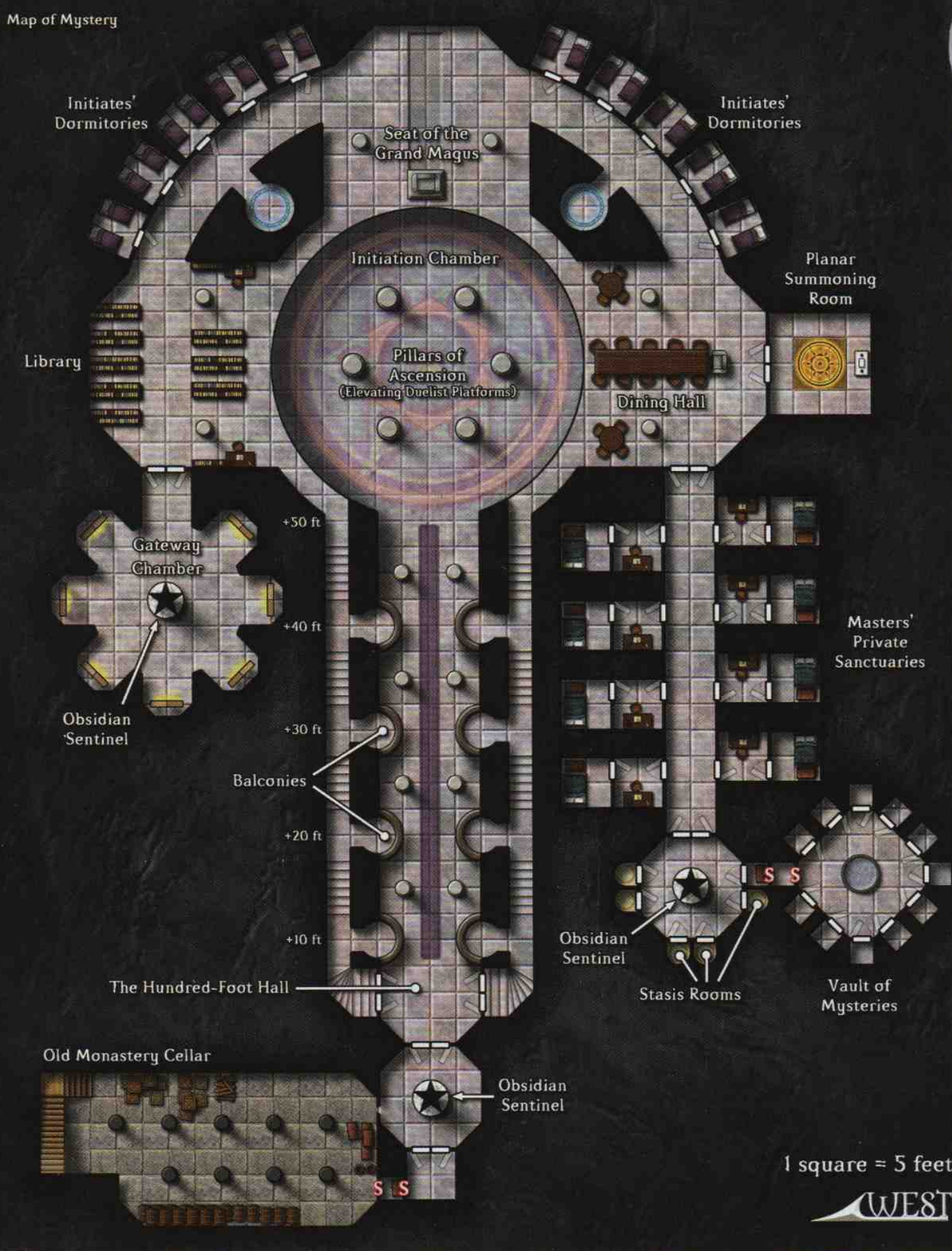
I CAN SEE WHY YOU PLAYERS ARE KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE FROM THE LITTLE BUGGER.
ACTUALLY, I THINK IT'S TRAPPED IN THERE *SOMEHOW.* FAR OUT.

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** Downer is ©2005 Kyle Stanley Hunter. A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**

THE ULOLOK IS MORE POWERFUL THAN EVEN I IMAGINED. I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE CARRIED IT THIS FAR, DOWNER.
WELL I'M NOT THRILLED BEING ANYONE'S PAWN, BUT I'VE COME THIS FAR. I TELL YOU, I'M NOT DOING THIS FOR FREE.
TAKE THE ULOLOK TO SIGIL, A BAR CALLED THE FUNIULAR. ONCE I AM THE GOD OF GAMING, YOU'LL BE REWARDED HANDSOMELY.
♫
WELL, H-HEY GUYS, WHAT'S SHAKIN'?
CREEPERS, HUH? Y'ALL ARE PART OF THE NEEDLEMAN'S CREW, RIGHT?
DOWNER, NO! COME WITH ME, HURRY! YOU'RE IN GRAVE DANGER!
TO BE CONTINUED

HALL OF THE ELESTIAL EYE

An Arcane Secret Society



DUNGEON #140

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BRAVE THE NEW ADVENTURE PATH
THE SAVAGE TIDE RISES
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Warren Mahy

THE BULLYWUG GAMBIT

by Nicolas Logue

The hidden caves of Kraken's Cove have long served the pirates of the Crimson Fleet as a place to stage their smuggling operations. When their latest cargo backfires, the PCs find themselves faced with something far worse than murderous pirates. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 3rd-level characters.

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Robert Lazzaretti

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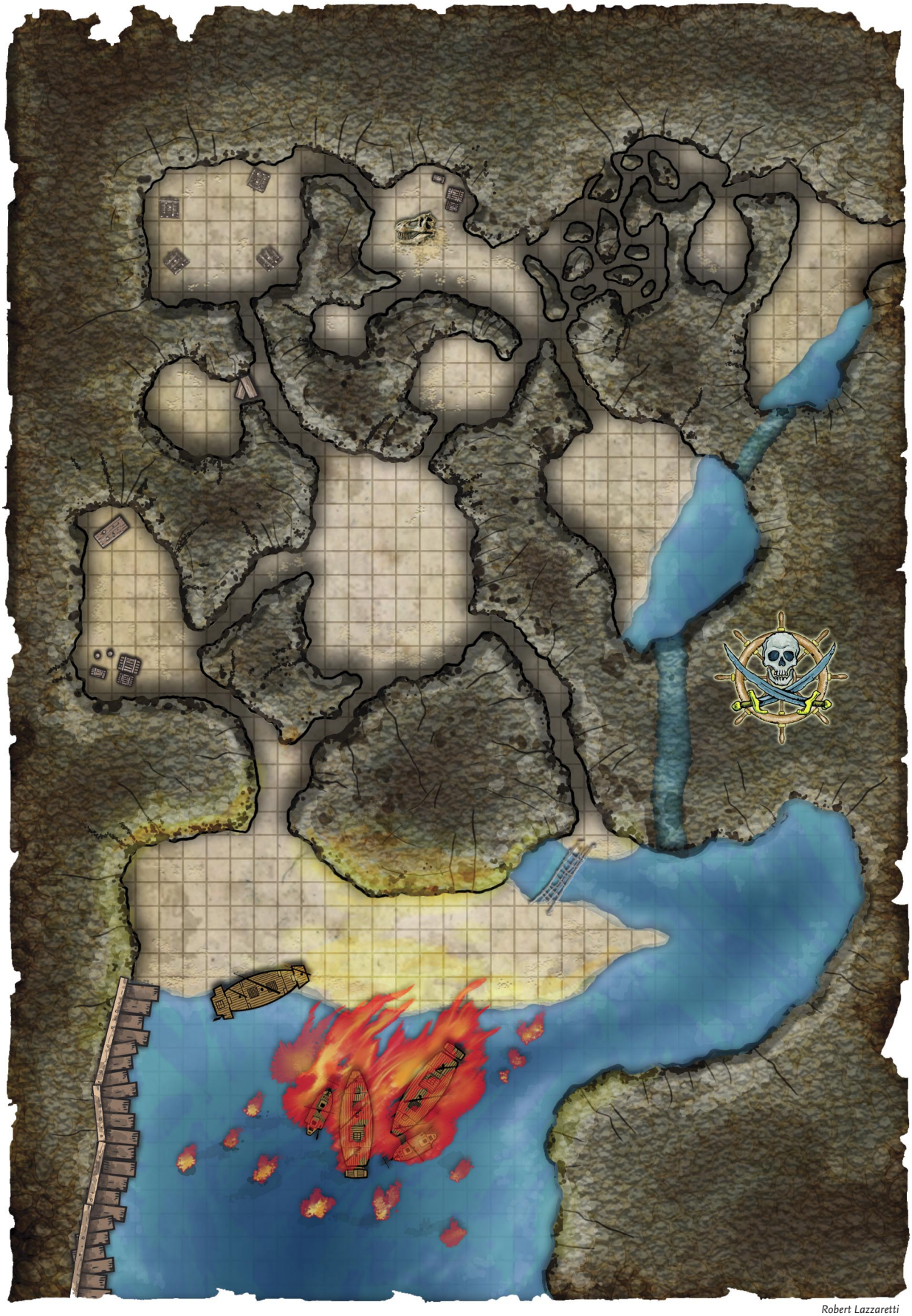

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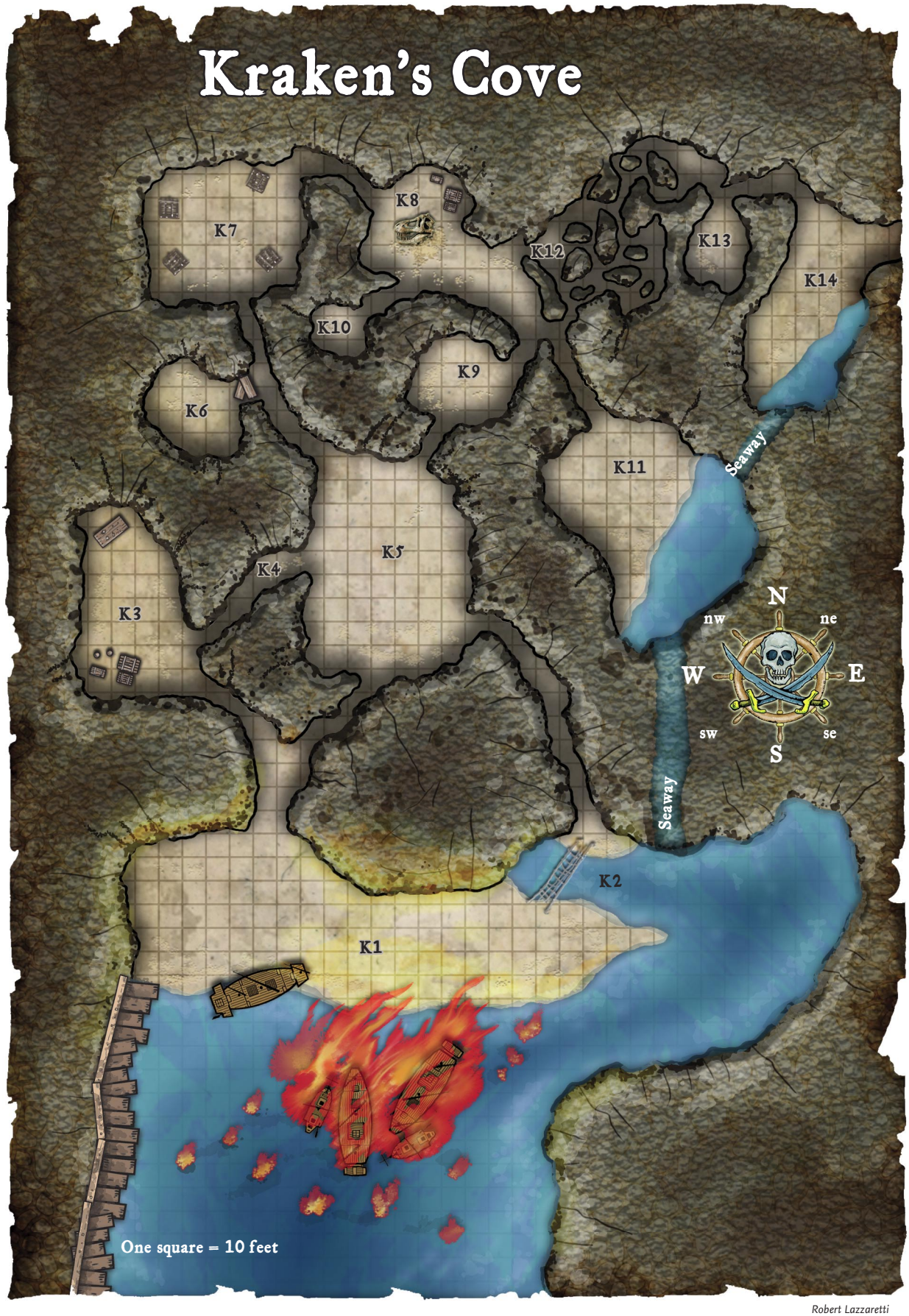

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Harliss Javell

Warren Mahy

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Steve Ellis

THE FALL OF GRAYMALKIN ACADEMY

by Mark A. Hart

Prestigious Graymalkin Academy, where the rich and fortunate go to learn the ways of magic, has fallen to the enemy! Can your PCs defeat its monstrous invaders? A D&D adventure for 9th-level characters.

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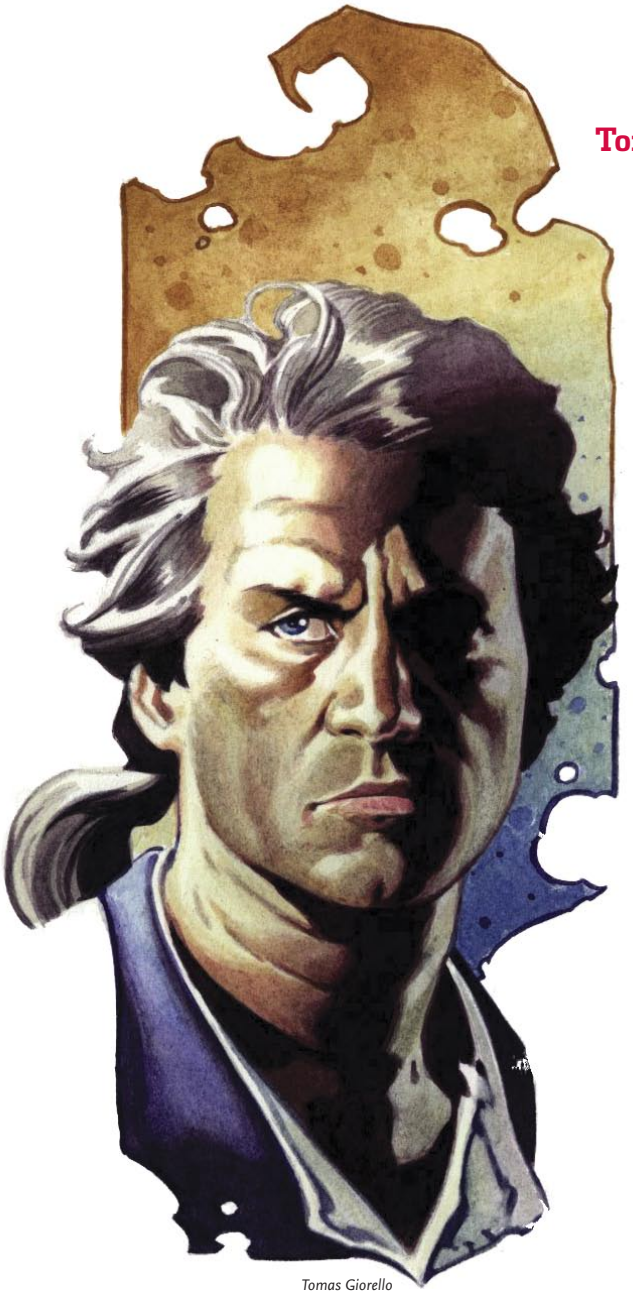
Tomas



Tomas Giorello

Moira

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Aldevein

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Vaxis

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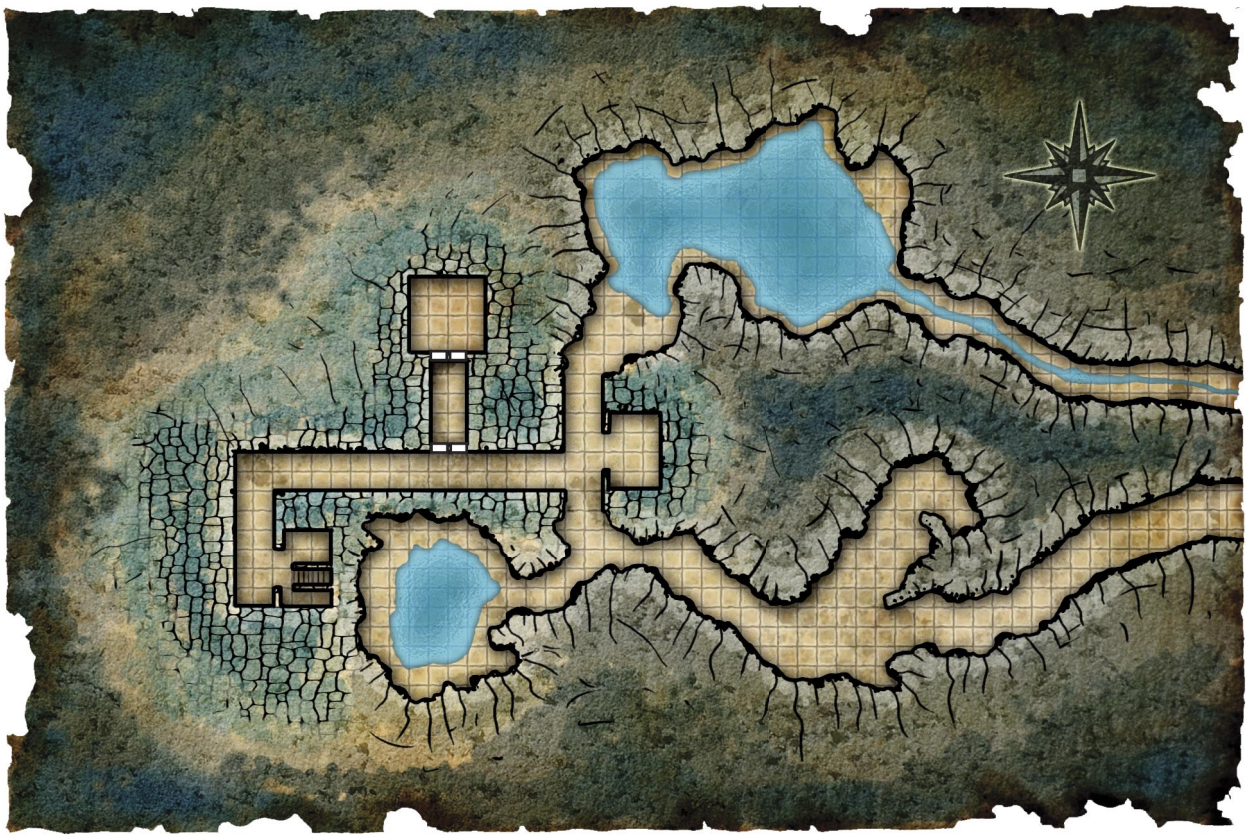

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Andrew Hou

HEART OF HELLFIRE MOUNTAIN

by "Weird" Dave Olson

It's one thing when fire giants cause problems for civilization, but it's another when the fire giants themselves have a problem that only adventurers can solve. A D&D adventure for 20th-level characters.

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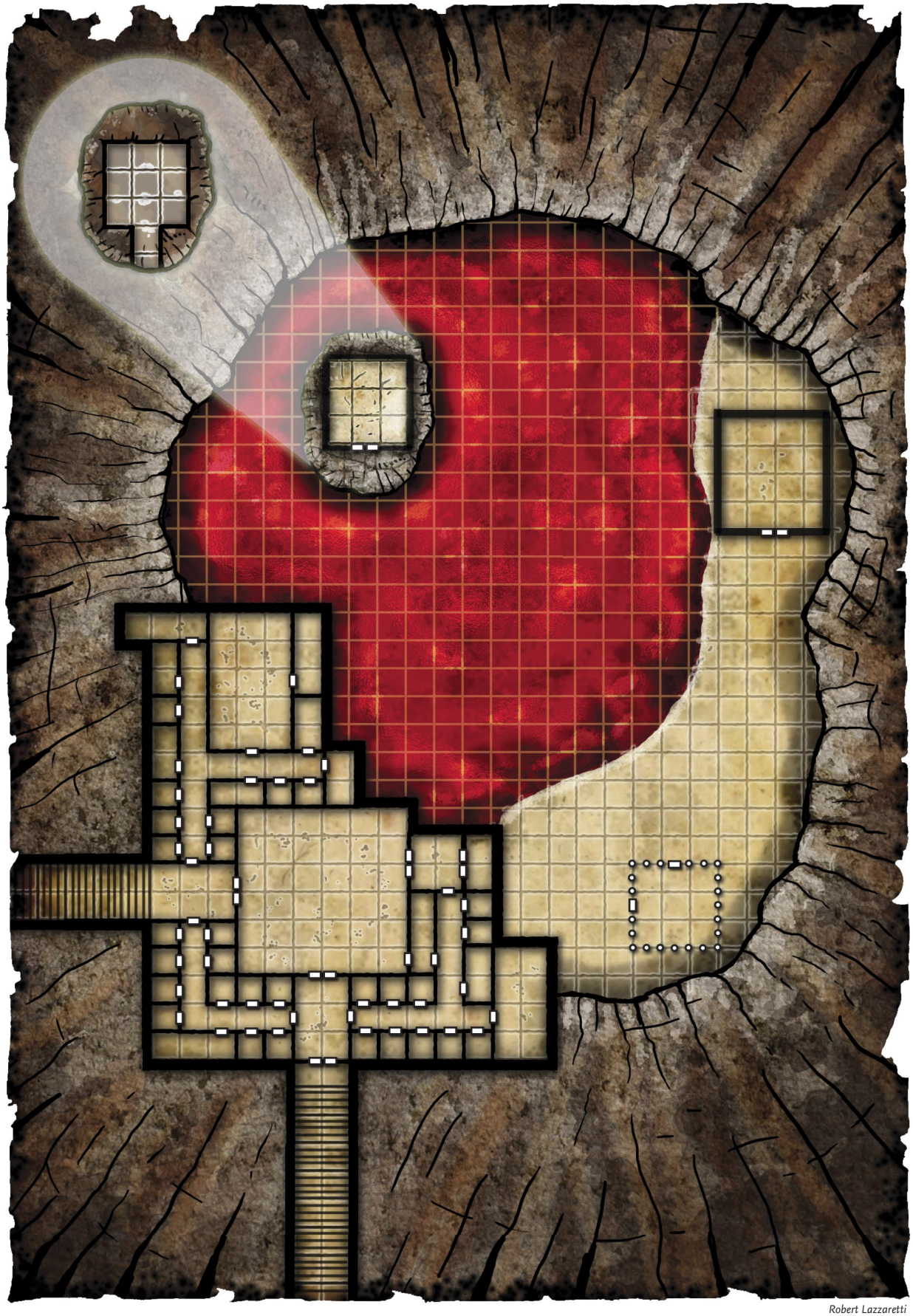

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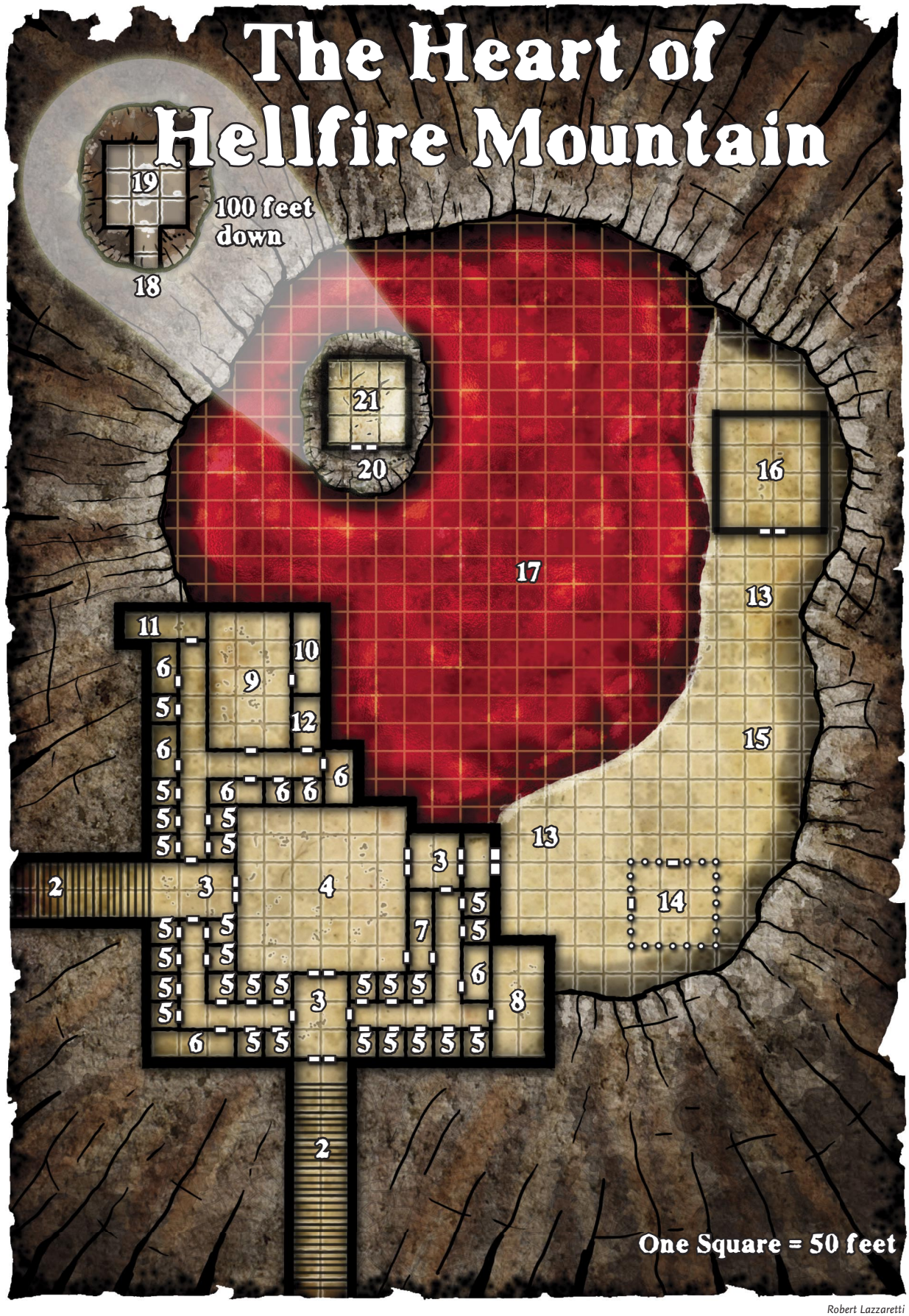

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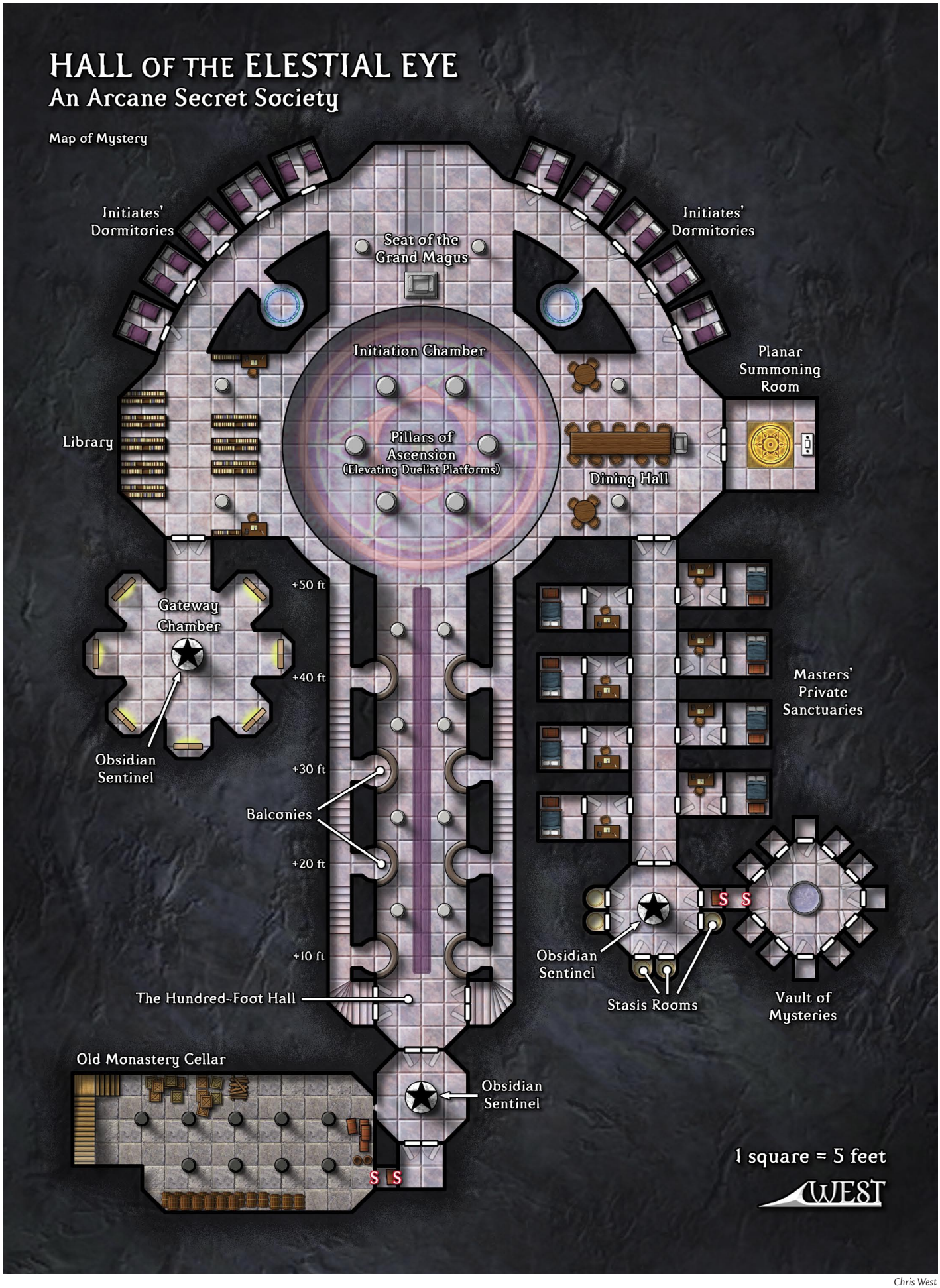

Chris West

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